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THE PEARLS,
AND
OTHER TALES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
OLGA ESCHENBACH AND AGNES FRANZ,

BY



Crauermantel.

BOSTON:
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DEDICATION.

DEAR LUCY:—

Fortune, and a luxuriant Southern nature, have so encircled you with their gifts, so decked your path with fruits and flowers, that your friend has nothing to offer save this garland of tender moral blossoms, which she hopes you will prize, not only for its own gentle merit, but also from your memories of a happy time when one roof sheltered many loving hearts, now scattered far and wide.

Never can one of that dear household band be forgotten by

THE TRANSLATOR.

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THE PEARLS.

BY

OLGA ESCHENBACH.

1

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW COUSIN.

ONE of the gloomiest of gloomy November days had just drawn to a close; the church clock in the little town of K——, on the Prussian frontier, had struck nine. Gray clouds hung heavily overhead, from which fell occasionally great drops of rain; the streets were pitch-dark, for the almanac promised moonlight, and wherefore then waste so much precious oil? At long intervals, the dread silence was broken by the rumbling of a slowly passing carriage, or the rapid step of a lonely pedestrian, who, drawing his cloak more closely about him, hastened onward, that he might the sooner reach some comfortable shelter.

But in Alexander Street, within the sump-

tuous mansion of the rich Councillor of Commerce, Mr. Werner, shone another sky, and the whole house resounded with the most joyous festivity. The long suits of rooms were brilliantly illuminated, and crowded with elegantly attired ladies and gentlemen; for all the best society in the town was there assembled. Honorable clergymen and counsellors in black coats, young officers in showy uniforms, the post-office officials, and the masters in the various schools, with their wives and daughters, were all gathered together; each selecting the diversion most consonant with his tastes and habits. The words "trick" and "great misery," frequently repeated, announced the game played at the various card-tables; groups of old gossips, happy in their mutual meeting, talked long and learnedly over the newest novelties, which each knew better than the rest, and which each had heard from the most unquestionable authority. Others stood near the *étagères*, and contemplated, with looks half envious, half contemptuous, the costly and yet useless articles with which they were covered, and which it

was the fashion to possess. Others again regaled themselves with the creams and ices abundantly provided by the wandering waiters, while the joyous youth danced gayly to the waltzes and *galops* played by the old town musician and his band.

The host and hostess were everywhere,—now providing entertainment for some solitary guest, now seeking a partner for some forlorn lady, with whom no one seemed anxious to dance, or sending her to the side room for refreshment; in short, busily engaged in fulfilling all the duties of hospitality, and rendering their guests as happy and contented as possible. The Councillor's lady was just approaching a venerable dowager, to whisper a compliment upon the grace and beauty of her dancing daughter, when she was suddenly called away. She quietly left the glittering throng, and betook herself to the housekeeper's room, where she was told some one desired to speak with her immediately. She remained away about an hour, and many were the surmises occasioned by this unseemly absence. Conjecture was nearly exhausted, when she

relieved the anxiety of the wondering crowd by her reappearance. But she was not alone ; she led by the hand a pale girl of about thirteen years of age, who was dressed in deep mourning, and who seemed too timid to lift her eyes from the ground.

“ What child is that ? ” was whispered on every side.

“ I do not know ! ” — “ Nor I ! ” — “ I never saw her before ! ” — were the only answers made to this question. Many then saw the lady lead the child to her husband, who, after a few low words of explanation, repeatedly kissed the trembling girl, and then went to the dancing-hall in search of his daughters. Various questions were addressed to him on his way, to all of which he replied : “ It is my niece, who has just arrived ! ”

This news spread like wild-fire.

The Councillor found no little difficulty in singling out his daughters from amid the crowd ; finally, however, his eyes fell upon the eldest, who was just about beginning to dance with a young lieutenant. “ Elmira ! ” he cried, “ promise the gentleman another

dance, and follow me at once to your mother."

"What is it?" asked the young girl, startled; "is mother unwell?"

"O no, no!" replied the father; "you will soon hear what she wants with you. But where is Pauline?" he asked, impatiently; "do you see her anywhere? I have looked in vain in every corner."

"She is sitting there," replied Elmira, pointing to her sister, who was lazily reclining in an arm-chair, and listening with every sign of weariness to several gentlemen, who seemed to be endeavoring in vain to amuse her by the display of their wit.

"Come," said Elmira, "mother is asking for us!"

"What can mother want?" replied Pauline, yawning. "I am so tired and exhausted that I really cannot rise?— Truly a strange demand!— Tell me only —"

"What is all this?" cried the Councillor, quite hastily; "tell yourself whatever you like, but get up and come at once!"

As his daughter still delayed to obey his

command, he half lifted her from her comfortable seat, and, taking her by the hand, led her away with him.

The Councillor's wife met them at the door, and said to her daughters: " You make us wait a long time, and the little one is so anxious to see you. Do you not recognize her ? "

The two girls shook their heads.

" That is indeed quite possible, for it is at least six years since you last saw her. She is your cousin Marian ! "

" Marian ! " cried Elmira, with joyful surprise, as she embraced the child, and bade her heartily welcome. " But, poor child, you are still in mourning ; when I last saw you, it was for your father. Whom have you lost recently ? "

" My mother, " stammered the little girl.

" Now, Pauline ! " said the Councillor to his youngest daughter, who stood by without displaying the least token of sympathy, " have you no friendly word to greet your cousin with ? "

Pauline came nearer to Marian, surveyed

her for a moment with a contemptuous smile, finally reached out her hand, and uttered a few words expressive of pleasure at again meeting her. But the tone of her voice betrayed how little her heart partook of the sentiments she uttered.

She turned coldly away, left the care of her cousin's entertainment to her sister, and placed herself in a window recess, where she found employment in tearing the lace from a beautiful cambric handkerchief, which she had received as a present only that very morning.

"What a shame!" cried, finally, a young lady who had been watching this strange occupation; "the handkerchief is so beautiful! I have for some time been admiring the lovely embroidery."

"Indeed!" replied Pauline, indifferently, "I was not thinking about it; besides, it was so mortally wearisome here!"

"How! does not dancing amuse you?"

"Nothing amuses me any more!"

"Nothing!" cried the lady astonished. "Ah! what a miserable being you must be! I enjoy everything! To-night I am happy here, and

amuse myself with dancing and talking ; to-morrow I will help my mother with the house-keeping, and work for my younger sisters with the same pleasure. If what you say is true, dear Pauline, I pity you from the bottom of my heart!"

So saying, she threw a glance of compassion towards the discontented girl, and then left her, in search of more entertaining company.

C H A P T E R II.

MARIAN'S HISTORY.

"I MUST now interrupt my tale," continued Gertrude (the narrator of this story), "and tell you something about Marian's previous life."

Her mother, although a poor orphan, had, through her beauty and amiability, attracted the notice of Captain Meerfeldt, Madame Werner's brother, who had been stationed during several months, as Commandant, in Helen's native town. He chose her for his wife, and she had scarcely reached her sixteenth year when she wore the bridal wreath.

The same clergyman who had baptized and confirmed her received her marriage vows, and many of the dwellers in the little town hastened to the church to see one whom they had scarcely remarked before the change in

her fortune. All the spectators united in praising the loveliness of the young bride ; but the clergyman, in presence of the whole assemblage, lauded her virtue and piety, and named him a happy man who had chosen her, in spite of her poverty, to be his companion through life.

When the ceremony was over, and Helen, leaning upon her husband's arm, left the church, the admiration of the by-standers was loudly spoken ; but the bride's lovely face suddenly became deathly pale, as if a breath from the charnel-house had withered the meek blossoms of her youthful happiness.

Near her stood an old woman, who cried out in a cracked, but loud and grating voice : " Woe to the bride ! Woe to the bride ! for many and heavy sorrows are to be her portion ! See," she continued, raising her voice to a still higher pitch, while she pointed to a string of costly pearls adorning Helen's white neck, (her husband's wedding gift,) — " only see ! she wears pearls to-day ; and pearls worn on the wedding day betoken tears,— tears of the bitterest sorrow ! "

Each one of these grief-foretelling words pierced the heart of the young wife. Shuddering and shivering as if all the evils predicted had already fallen upon her, she approached the house of the aged relative who had brought her up, before whose door stood the travelling carriage which was to bear her to M——, where the garrison was stationed to which her husband then belonged. She speedily exchanged her wedding-dress for a gray travelling-habit, and trembled as she loosed the wreath from amid her dark locks, and placed it in the casket with the ominous pearls.

Helen bade farewell to the little town in which she had hitherto dwelt, whose limits she had never before passed, and accompanied her husband to one of the largest and gayest cities in the kingdom.

The Captain introduced his young and charming wife to many of the most noted and agreeable families. She everywhere met with a friendly reception. All admired her beauty, but still more her easy, natural manners. The dignity with which she moved

within the circles hitherto closed to her, and the modesty and propriety with which she met the proffered attention and esteem, closed the lips of even those who secretly envied her. She loved her husband fondly and deeply ; he became every day more and more dear to her ; his society gave her far more pleasure than the most brilliant balls and concerts, and often, with tears in her beautiful eyes, did she assure him of her unalloyed and unlimited happiness.

Two children, who both saw the light on the same day, soon increased the contentment of the devoted pair ; a still stronger bond united the Captain to his wife, and he would sit for hours, gazing with inward delight upon the ways of the young mother when she was busied with those little beings, who, under her protecting care, bloomed with health and beauty ; like tender plants, which the careful gardener with unspeakable and unwearying devotion strives to shield from every rude blast.

Six years passed thus amid the most untroubled happiness. The lovely twins had already five times celebrated their birthdays ;

their minds and bodies developed charmingly under the care of their parents, the roses of health bloomed upon their cheeks, and the same wonderful similarity which characterized their external appearance seemed also to exist in their souls, even in their childish wishes and inclinations. The tenderest love bound them together, the most perfect harmony reigned between them ; and if ever the boy distressed his more gentle sister through his childish thoughtlessness, a single tear sufficed to lead him to repentance, and he strove with a thousand caresses and attentions to earn his pardon. The parents were the frequent witnesses of these touching scenes ; they rejoiced over the good dispositions of their children, and made many plans with one another to bring them up nobly, and endow them with the most complete culture possible of both heart and head, without once dreaming how soon one of their darlings was to be taken from them.

Already, during several months, a painful malady, the whooping-cough, had raged in M—, bearing with it horror and dismay

into the bosom of many a family, and laying low many a fair, young childish head. Gustavus and Marian were also seized with it. Helen at first hoped it might be only a cold, but was soon forced to confess, with a sorrow-stricken heart, that she had deceived herself.

The cough increased daily, and soon was heard that fearful sound, that peculiar breathing, which marks infallibly the presence of this disease. The blood frequently gushed from the boy's mouth and nose, but in the midst of the severest paroxysms he would throw himself trustingly upon the bosom of his trembling mother. In vain did she conjure the physician to aid her children. He mournfully shook his head, and said: "Why should I prescribe anything for your children, when I know from experience that no remedy can drive out the malady when once fixed, or even alleviate its violence. Have patience: it will pass away of itself in six or eight weeks, and then I will most willingly prescribe means for strengthening the weakened constitutions, and restoring the little ones to

their usual state of health; at present, they would be quite useless."

Who can describe the unutterable anguish with which the mother watched through the seemingly endless nights by the sick-beds of her children? She could not but shudder, when, after a few moments of troubled sleep, they would awake and pierce her heart with their melancholy cry: "Mamma, Mamma, the cough is coming!" and then fall exhausted upon her breast.

Even the manly firmness of the Captain was shaken by the recurrence of these heart-rending scenes. In vain did he seek to persuade his wife, exhausted by such unremitting night-watches, to take a few hours of rest; in vain did he endeavor to console her, and inspire her with the hope that the children would soon recover, as the first six weeks were nearly over. She shook her head despondingly. How indeed could he succeed in convincing her, when he himself placed little confidence in the truth of his own assertions? He could only then share with her her care and watching. Every hour not absolutely

demanded by the duties of his profession was passed in the sick-room of his children; but alas! all was in vain.

Pitiless Death exacted an offering, and after a few weeks, Gustavus lay quietly in his little coffin. Charming as an angel, the boy rested amid the flowers on the satin cushion, himself a lovely blossom, nipped by the rude breath of the passing storm which had yet left his beauty unmarred. The poor mother covered her darling with hot kisses, and, with heart-breaking anguish, called aloud his dear name.

"Ah! she was right, the old prophetess of evil!" said she to her husband in an agony of grief. "I have never forgotten her words,—'Pearls on a wedding day betoken tears,—tears of the bitterest sorrow!'"

Finally, however, after a severe struggle, she succeeded in regaining her self-command, and, falling on her knees beside the little coffin, prayed fervently and with a holy confidence to the merciful Father in heaven for strength to bear her heavy lot. She rose more resigned and peaceful. The continual care required by the still suffering Marian prevented

her from giving way to her grief, and she was forced to forget herself and her own sorrow at the sight of her husband's silent but deep affliction. During a long time, the unhappy father could not see a young boy without bursting into tears ; he often sat for hours together, gazing fixedly upon vacancy. Apparently weaned from all surrounding him, cold even towards his newly recovered little daughter, it seemed as if he desired to nourish his grief by collecting around him everything which had belonged to his lost son. The boy's picture-books lay upon his writing-desk ; by his side stood the hobby-horse, the riding on which had been his child's greatest pleasure ; all the playthings he had used, and the clothes he had last worn, were placed in the father's room. But the Captain now learned more perfectly to appreciate the deep feeling, the self-sacrificing love, and the unfeigned piety of his wife, who stood ever at his side like a consoling angel ; and who finally succeeded, with her gently persuasive words, in restoring him to quiet and resignation.

It was fortunate for her that she had not succumbed beneath this first stroke which threatened to destroy all her quiet happiness, and that her trust in God had not been shaken or weakened. For the death of her child was but the prelude to a much more dreadful scene of suffering and horror.

The winter passed slowly away. The Captain and his wife led a solitary life, apart from all society; for their wounds were not yet healed, and they often thought sorrowfully of their departed boy, whose little grave returning spring already began to adorn with fresh green grass and many-colored flowers. The quiet graveyard was the constant goal of Helen's walks, whither her husband could now but rarely accompany her, as important business connected with his profession detained him away from her nearly the whole day. The king was expected in M——; the troops were to be reviewed during his sojourn, and officers as well as men were occupied from early dawn till late in the evening, preparing to receive their much-honored ruler.

"Farewell, dearest!" said the Captain one

morning to his wife, waking her from her light slumbers with a tender kiss ; “ I must leave you very early to-day, as I am obliged to be at the gate of the parade-ground before five o’clock. But do not disturb yourself ; remain quietly in bed ; my servant can do all that is needful for me ! ”

But Helen, knowing well how her husband disliked to breakfast without her, would not yield to his gentle persuasion, and, assuring him she needed no more sleep, rose hastily in order to prepare the morning beverage for her dear one with her own hands. But the Captain could not long delay ; on no consideration would the punctual soldier have missed his appointment. He pressed one kiss upon the rosy lips of his still sleeping daughter, once more affectionately embraced his wife, and then hurried down the steps. He quickly mounted his horse, and, striking the handsome, spirited animal lightly upon the neck, he nodded a last friendly farewell towards the open window. As he rode off, he cried out to Helen, who was looking after him : “ I am glad to be able to ride my

old bay to-day; his sore eye is quite well again!"

The warm sunlight streamed through the open window, crowning the pretty, curly-headed Marian as with a saintly glory. The tender mother bent over the child's bed, while her lips lightly pressed the little hand lieing upon the coverlet. She then rose, and, drawing her work-table nearer to the window, took out a piece of embroidery, already tolerably well advanced, with which she intended to surprise her husband on his birthday.

Scarcely had she taken a few stitches, when she felt herself overcome by the most incomprehensible sensation of uneasiness. She endeavored in vain to control herself, to count her threads and proceed with her work, but she was always forced to renew her enumeration, and soon her swimming eyes failed entirely to distinguish the colors.

"Great God! what is the matter with me?" she finally cried aloud, flinging her work aside, and pacing hastily up and down the room. Her heart beat hurriedly; a strange, vague

fear disturbed her mind ; she sank upon a chair with her head buried in her hands, while the tears flowed swiftly down upon her bosom. A slight noise upon the door-step roused her from this position. Inspired by a dark presentiment of evil, she rushed to the door and tore it hastily open ; but she stood as if death-stricken, when she beheld her husband leaning, pale as ashes, against the balustrade.

"Do not be frightened, Helen!" said the Captain, in a faint, stifled tone ; "I fell from my horse, but — it is nothing — all will be well to-morrow!"

Making a great effort, he approached his wife, leaned upon her arm, and tottered to a sofa, upon which he sank down utterly exhausted. But, once more raising himself up, he drew his writing-table towards him, and, taking out a sheet of paper, said faintly : "I must inform the Commandant that I shall be unable to fulfil my duties to-day."

He had scarcely traced a few illegible words, when he fell back in a swoon.

Helen sent immediately for a physician,

but succeeded, through her own efforts, in restoring her husband's animation before the arrival of the doctor. The Captain opened his eyes, looked wildly round, and, clasping his head with both his hands, cried out in the most heart-rending tones: "O what agony! — Why do you gaze upon me with such fixed and glassy eyes?" continued he, after a short pause, seizing at the same moment his wife's hand, which he, however, speedily flung aside. "Ha! your hand is damp and cold, as if you were already lying in the darksome grave.— As I rode down the street," he added, after another pause, "and was swiftly turning a corner, my bay reared, frightened by an old woman. I was thrown, and fell with my head against a stone!"

At this moment the physician entered; but at the first glance his countenance assumed a most serious expression. Helen watched his face with anxious looks, and finally said in a trembling voice: "What am I to hope? I beseech you, hide nothing from me. Better far the most fearful certainty, than this torturing, agonizing suspense, slowly eating out

the heart and inflicting all the torments of the damned.—O my merciful Heavenly Father, what am I to hear?" cried she, wringing her hands, as the doctor was still silent. "Speak, doctor!—Life and death hang upon your words!—I am prepared for the worst!"

Pale and shivering stood she there, staring fixedly upon the physician's face; but so expressionless were her eyes, that she seemed already bereft of reason. Then, passing her hand across her brow, like one who knows not whether she is dreaming or awake, her eyes suddenly fell upon her unfortunate husband, and, seizing the doctor's arm convulsively, she again implored him to hide nothing from her.

"Take courage, honored lady!" said the physician, his voice trembling with suppressed emotion; for though he had witnessed so many painful scenes, his heart was still too tender to remain unmoved in the presence of such suffering. "Take courage!" he repeated, and then paused, as if shuddering before the horror of being forced to announce the death-warrant of the husband to the trem-

bling wife. The latter still stood as if awaiting his words, her eyes fastened upon him with dreadful expectancy, and her hands clasping his arm tighter and tighter, as he finally said, in a low and quivering voice: "O, take courage, for you will have need of it! You ask the truth, and I feel I must not deceive you. Your husband is—lost! His skull is broken!"

Helen fell upon the floor with a cry which pierced through every nerve in the doctor's frame. A beneficent fainting fit, which left her unconscious during many hours, destroyed, at least for a time, all sense of the misery which had befallen one who was as yet scarcely consoled for the loss of her child.

She finally opened her eyes; a mournful voice fell upon her ear: "Helen! Helen!" cried the Captain, "and have you too deserted me? O, I never could have expected that from you!"

Bursting into an agony of tears, Helen fell on her knees by his side; through the tenderest caresses and most loving words, she strove to convince him of her presence; but she soon

knew, by the expression of his wildly rolling eyes, that her efforts were all in vain. He tore the hand away from her clasp which she was about to press to her lips, and cried out in a piercing voice: "Away with you, old woman! away with you out of my sight! It was you who frightened my horse, and ho!—now I know you,—you are the same raven that croaked forth woe to my wife on her wedding day, because she wore pearls. You placed yourself purposely in my way this morning, that your prophecy might come true.—‘Pearls betoken tears!’" repeated he in the same harsh tone,—“did you not say so?”

These words were followed by a burst of wild laughter, like that of the insane. He sank back exhausted. A few moments later, he called out, in faint, melting tones: “O Helen! Helen! You could help me, if you only would! If you would only give me your hand,—only lay one finger upon my burning brow,—all would be well again. Ah yes! then I should be happy and quite well!”

“Ah! my good God!” cried the poor wife, folding her hands despairingly,—“what tor-

ture!—what pain! Could I save you, my Arthur, I would sell my heart's blood to buy your life; I would willingly die, could my death procure you the faintest alleviation!"

A convulsive sobbing threatened to suffocate her; deep groans, forced out by the irrepressible anguish of her soul, now alone broke the silence. She tried to pray, but she could not, and, looking upward with a reproachful glance, her pale lips stammered: "Why hast thou done this to me?"

But let us draw a veil across this picture!

Fourteen long, fearful days passed, with snail-like pace; on the morning of the fifteenth, God heard Helen's earnest prayer, and took the suffering man, who during the latter portion of the time had lain as if benumbed, to himself. Could she ever have thought it possible that she would one day beseech the death of her husband as a favor from Heaven?

When the doctor said to her, "He is no more!" she threw herself upon the dear but lifeless form, and pressed the cold hands to her lips; her tearless eyes rested upon the

features, now strangely distorted by long suffering, and pressing her pale brow upon the quiet heart, which had once beaten so warmly for her, she murmured softly, "God be thanked!"

A strange calmness took possession of her; she was able to arrange everything for the funeral with the greatest precision; she even sometimes reproached herself with her indifference. But as the last sound of the bell died away, and the funeral march, which had accompanied the Captain to his last earthly resting-place could no longer be heard,—as the last of his mourning comrades, who had wished to follow him in that melancholy procession, had departed,—then did she first feel the utter solitude and boundless desolation which surrounded her.

"Arthur! Arthur!" she cried in her despairing anguish, "why have you left me?" She wrung her hands, and seemed to have but one thought: "I have lost him!" Spurning all consolation, she sent her daughter from her side, and death seemed to her the only possible refuge from her overwhelming misery.

Marian shrank into a corner, and, holding the end of her neck-handkerchief up to her eyes, sobbed as if her little heart would break. After the lapse of several hours, the doctor entered quite unexpectedly. "What is the matter, my dear little one?" he asked gently, as he placed the child beside him in a chair; "why do you weep so bitterly?"

"Ah, dear doctor!" said Marian, throwing her arms round his neck, "beg mamma not to be angry with me any longer. Indeed I was not naughty, but she sent me away from her. They have put my poor papa in a black chest, and carried him away, and now they say he will never come back, because he is dead, like my little brother. And now mamma sits all alone, and cries, and prays God to let her die too. Ah! then I would be quite alone, and no one would love me any more! Not so, doctor!" continued she, looking inquiringly into the doctor's face with her beautiful blue eyes. "That would be very hard! Mother said so herself, when God took my brother away, and my good father was so sad. She said to him: 'It is much better

the boy should go before us, than if we had both died first, and had been forced to leave him here alone.' Dear good doctor," continued the child again, weeping gently, while she wiped away with her tender little hands the great tears now rolling over the old man's cheeks, "will you not tell my dear mamma she might love me only a little, once more; she has always been so good to me! Or, if she will die, she must take me with her, so that we may be all together again. Surely, my good papa will ask her, 'Why have you not brought my little Marian with you?' For he loved me dearly, and always asked for me when I was not by."

Helen had heard all, and could not resist the impression which these words were calculated to produce on the heart of a mother. She sprang to her feet, and, pressing the child to her heart, exclaimed: "Yes, I will stay with you, you little angel! my life belongs to you! For you will I seek to preserve it, and to your education shall it be devoted!"

Helen kept her word. She left the spacious mansion, in which she had so deeply suffered,

for a little dwelling in the suburbs of the city. None of her earlier acquaintances who had previously expressed so deep an interest concerning her, sought out her retirement; none of those who had so much admired her in her prosperity, came now to console her. But Helen felt no need of such empty consolation, of set phrases, carelessly repeated on all similar occasions; she sought valid comfort within her own soul, strength from prayer,—occupation and quiet, from devotion to her daughter.

Her husband had left her no property. A small widow's pension, which, after many vain efforts, was finally granted her, scarcely sufficed to cover all her necessary wants. But she bore the privation which the change in her circumstances had enforced upon her, without a murmur; she felt it the less, as her life from her earliest childhood to the time of her marriage had been filled with similar trials.

But a secret longing for the dear companion loved so deeply, and so sadly lost, gradually undermined her health; her strength left her, and the thought of an early death often presented itself to her mind. How peacefully

would she not have welcomed the dark guest, had not her daughter bound her still to life! The physician had prescribed, for the re-establishment of her health, remedies more costly than her little income could procure; and only through the sale of her ornaments, and some of her furniture, could she defray the necessary expenses.

One evening, late in the fall, Helen sat in her arm-chair by the window, with the light of the setting sun streaming in upon her. She felt weaker than usual, and her eyes were sadly fixed upon the face of her daughter, who, with folded hands, knelt at her feet, striving in vain to restrain the tears which the sight of her mother's wasted and care-worn features forced from her.

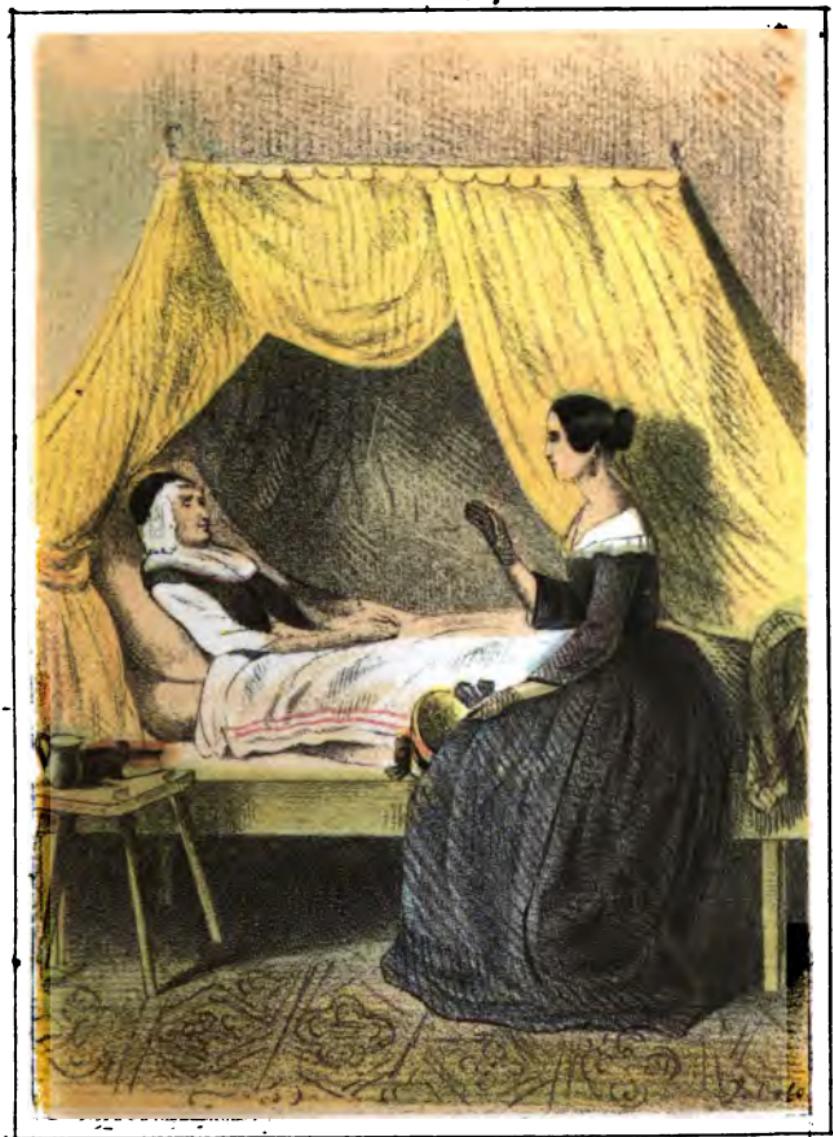
"Ah!" murmured the widow, "will she too, with her gentle heart, be forced to suffer as I have done? Will she too see her dearest upon earth perish amid the most frightful torments? O my good Heavenly Father! if it be possible, spare my child what her mother has endured. But," added she, after a short pause passed in deep thought,— at the

same time folding her hands, and raising her eyes, from which rayed the purest and most steadfast trust in God,—“not my will, but thine, be done!”

Marian wept aloud. Helen laid her hand upon her daughter’s pure brow, and said: “Trust all to God, and hope in Him who doeth all things well.”

Deeply moved, she kissed her child repeatedly; her heart told her it was the last parting. Her voice seemed failing as she said: “Here is my wedding ring;—take it, and keep it until I ask you for it,—and if I should never do so, then will it often tell you how truly and deeply your mother loved you. And now, quick, my good, pious child, hand me the casket which stands yonder under the looking-glass.”

Marian’s hands trembled as she obeyed her mother’s command, and the widow with difficulty succeeded in opening the casket. It contained a Bible, a letter, and a string of Oriental pearls. Helen said: “This book will afford you consolation; it has strengthened me through many a hard struggle. This letter,



Powers & Water's Lith. Boston.

THE PEARLS.

you must take to your father's sister, Madame Werner, who lives in K——; she will be a mother to you when I shall be no more. These pearls are your only inheritance! I wore them on my wedding day, whence an old woman foretold me many and bitter tears. May they bring you only happiness and good fortune!"

After a few moments of deep silence, she continued: "Our little furniture and my clothes are for Christine, who, through her faithful service, has richly deserved the only reward we can bestow upon her. You will find in my writing-desk a purse containing a hundred dollars; one half will suffice to meet all the expenses of my interment, while the other will defray the cost of your journey. I wish to rest by your father's side!"

Marian's hot tears fell upon her mother's hand, which she felt growing gradually cold and colder within her own. She sprang to her feet;—life had already quitted that fragile form, and Marian was an orphan.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

ON the morning following the above-mentioned dancing-party, the Councillor's family were assembled in the large sitting-room. He himself stood in a window recess, looking through a package of old newspapers, evidently seeking some notice which he deemed important. His wife sat on the sofa, and was employed in making coffee. Elmira walked up and down the room with her arm round Marian's waist; they were talking very earnestly, and tears often moistened Elmira's eyes as she listened to her young cousin.

Coffee was at length ready; and the lady handed her husband a large cup, filled with the aromatic beverage. He thanked her as he took it from her hand, looked hastily round

the room, and then seized upon a little silver bell, which he rang loudly.

"Where is my youngest daughter?" asked he of the maid who answered the summons.

"Miss Pauline is still in bed," was the answer; "I was just on my way to her with the yesterday's newspapers."

"She must get up immediately and come to breakfast; the clock is striking ten. She must surely have slept her sleep out by this time."

The servant left the room. "It is really melancholy," said the Councillor, turning to his wife, "that I have no time to devote to my children; you spoil them entirely. It is impossible to bear Pauline's whims any longer; she does nothing all day but read romances, or lie on the sofa and yawn. Are those proper occupations for a girl thirteen years old? As soon as I have finished with my sugar business, I shall have a couple of days to spare, and then I will soon put an end to all this folly, I promise you."

Without heeding the excuses which his wife offered, he drew the table towards him, and

began to reckon very busily. Meanwhile the ladies drank their coffee, with much conversation between the cups, only in a suppressed tone, that they might not disturb the father. The clock struck half past eleven, and the waiter came in to carry away the breakfast things.

“Miss Pauline has not yet had her coffee,” said the Councillor; “do you know, Lewis, whether she is up yet?”

“Charlotte is just putting on her stockings,” replied the servant, “and I have orders to send her coffee to her room.”

The Councillor rose from his seat, ran a line hastily across his figures, thrust the book into his pocket, and, arresting the waiter on his way to the door, seized the cup and took it from his hand.

“None of that!” cried he angrily; “she must come down immediately, or I will go myself and help pull on her stockings. Elmira, go at once and tell your sister so in my name.—This is really too much, enough to try the patience of a saint. I am an old man; I work from early until late; I need no one to wait

upon me; and my young lady of a daughter acts as if she were a born princess. Nothing can be done except to send her out of the house for a few months. Only yesterday I heard our neighbor Dunning speak of a new seminary; I will go to him at once, and if I am satisfied with his report, Pauline shall go there,—to-morrow,—day after to-morrow,—certainly this week."

So saying, he took his hat and stick, and hurried out of the house.

About an hour later, Pauline entered the sitting-room. Her dress, although tasteless and unsuitable, betrayed the time and attention bestowed upon it. Her hair hung in a profusion of little curls about her thin neck, only half protected by a flimsy gauze handkerchief; her light-colored dress, adorned with a variety of blue bows, seemed out of keeping with the autumnal tempest raging without. Her complexion was pale and sickly, her breathing, quick and short, the evident consequence of being too tightly laced. Without deigning a single word to her mother, her sister, or her young cousin, she threw

herself upon a chair, and, taking a biscuit from a bread-basket standing near, began to feed a parrot, whose cage was placed on a table beside her.

“Good morning, dear Pauline!” said the Councillor’s lady; “I am afraid you will find your coffee quite cold, although I have tried very hard to keep it warm for you.”

“I thought you were going to send my breakfast up to me,” was the careless answer. “It is really a most extraordinary expectation on my father’s part, that I should be up and dressed by ten o’clock, when I did not go to bed until nearly two. But I can guess the reason: I suppose my tender sister has been accompanying her morning greeting with some flattering speeches concerning myself.”

So saying, she smiled bitterly, and cast an ironical glance towards Elmira.

“You are mistaken,” gently replied the elder sister, “if you think I have any desire of lessening the affection of our parents for you. Of what advantage would that be to me? I think we neither of us have any reason to complain of want of kindness on the part of

our parents ; but," she continued sadly, " I have often thought you were not satisfied with your share, as — "

" Be quiet, Elmira !" entreated the mother. " You know that Pauline is often unwell ; her nerves are so weak, and she is so excitable, that you must forgive her when she is somewhat out of humor. But here comes your father ! "

The Councillor entered hastily, and cried out: " I know a way now to end all this trouble. Pauline shall go away this very week. I will take her myself ; but stay !—no, that will not do !—I must be here when the new machine is set up. That, however, does not alter my plans in the least ; you, Miss — are to go with me. You can then be convinced through your own experience that girls are much better brought up abroad than at home. Two hundred dollars a year ! That includes tuition, wholesome food, and washing,—what more could one desire ? I will myself especially beg the mistress to permit my daughter to read no romances, and to treat her precisely as she does the other

scholars. I'll warrant you there will be no more talk about putting on stockings, and such nonsense. And no sweet things are to be sent to her;—do you hear, good wife?—that is my most earnest desire, for only by such means can we restore the child to health and reason. It is twelve o'clock. I must go to the counting-house. To-day is Monday. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,—three days will suffice for all the necessary preparations; on Friday then you will go, and may God be with you!"

Pauline did not comprehend a word of her father's speech. Her mother endeavored, as gently as possible, to enlighten her with regard to his well-meant intentions; but her agreeable representations found not the least favor in the young lady's eyes.

"Go to boarding school!" she cried, angrily, "and work the whole day!—Let strangers prescribe what I shall, or shall not do!—If father does not give up this plan, he will destroy me. Tell him so, mother! I will not go; and we will see who will be able to force me."

She sprang up in a rage, and hurried out of the room, slamming the door behind her, so that all the windows shook again. Her gauze handkerchief caught in the door-way; but, without troubling herself to open the door, she gave the flimsy thing a pull, tearing it in two, and leaving a part of it behind her. Marian looked after her, utterly astonished.

Pauline shut herself up in her own room, and did not again appear until the following day. The mother went several times to her daughter's door, but without obtaining admittance. Pauline meanwhile lived upon cakes and candies, of which she had a secret hoard, and laughed in her sleeve over her mother's anxiety. In vain did the Councillor's lady strive to induce her husband to change his purpose. Neither the mother's prayers nor the daughter's stubbornness could persuade him to alter his determination, and the only concession he would make was, that Marian might accompany her cousin.

Friday came at last; both girls had packed up their things, and Pauline had found some

consolation in the thought that her finery would make a great sensation in the institution. The whole hall was filled with trunks and chests, bandboxes and travelling-bags ; the carriage stood before the door. Pauline sat upon a great chest and kept the servants busy, running in every direction, searching for articles she had forgotten. The mother stood near with warm wrappings, cloaks, and socks, at the same time giving sundry orders to the old housekeeper.

Marian wept as she embraced Elmira. "I am so sorry to leave you," said she, "you have become so dear to me during the few days of my residence here. Who knows when we will meet again?"

"In three years, at the latest!" exclaimed the Councillor, who had just entered in time to hear these last words. "But what under the sun is all this rubbish for?" he continued, gazing round in amazement. "It looks just as if you were bound for the annual fair! Which are your things, Marian?"

"This trunk, dear uncle, contains all my clothes, and my bed is yonder, packed up with my cousin's."

“ And all the rest ? ”

“ Belong to me ! ” cried Pauline, triumphantly.

“ Will you then have the kindness to inform me how many carts you have engaged to carry your baggage ? ”

Without awaiting an answer, he flung several of the trunks open, and drew forth hats of straw and crape, shawls and ribbons, dresses of every color and material, a variety of eatables, and even several bottles of wine.

“ What man,” he cried, lifting his hands in blank amazement, “ could believe such folly possible ? — Lewis, take the large chest which belongs to the close carriage, and pack it with such things as I will hand to you ? ”

The Councillor made a rapid but judicious selection from among the multitude of articles lying scattered around him. He buckled the straps himself, and, turning the key in the padlock, placed it in the hands of Pauline, who stood by silent with rage.

“ There,” said he, “ now take good care of it. Most probably you were not aware that you were going into the country, where you

can make no use of all this lumber. Cakes and wine will be also useless, for they will suffer you neither to hunger nor to thirst. You are to remain three years at Blenden. We will be very glad to hear from you often; we will write to you whenever we can, and will be happy to gratify every reasonable wish you may express; but during these three years you shall not come home, even on a visit, although Blenden is only thirty-six miles from here; — such is my fixed determination. The Principal of the school is my old friend Dunning's sister, a most worthy lady; I hope you will behave there like a reasonable girl, so that no one may have any cause for complaint. And now go, with God's blessing!"

Without returning any answer to her father, Pauline took her seat in the carriage; the mother and Marian followed; the latter once more shook hands with Elmira, who stood on the steps, and the carriage rolled away.

They did not reach their destination until the following day at noon. The Principal, Madame Heinau, who had been informed by

her brother of all the particulars, gave them a most friendly reception, and the Councillor's lady was fully convinced that she could not leave her daughter in better hands. The young girls, about fourteen in number, all looked fresh and healthy; the mother's fears were considerably diminished by this observation, and she returned to K—— the same evening, tolerably content.

A few days sufficed to render Pauline universally disliked by her schoolmates. The first morning after her arrival, she complained of having slept very badly, by reason of a large clock which stood against the wall of the room, and insisted upon its being immediately transported to some other place. This demand not being complied with, she became very angry. Meanwhile, Miss Dalmer, the name of the teacher who shared Pauline's room, informed that young lady it was time to rise. This observation producing no result, much eloquence was expended before the lazy girl finally showed symptoms of leaving her bed, and asked for a maid. Madame Heinau, who had by this time made her appearance,

assured her that all the maids belonging to the establishment were very busy, and could not leave their work.

"Then," cried Pauline angrily, "Marian must come and put on my stockings!"

Madame Heinau smiled, and said: "You seem to be a sadly spoiled little girl. Your cousin is eating her breakfast with the other children; in one half-hour the lessons begin, so that you must make haste, or you will not be ready in time. I will fasten your dress myself."

So saying, the lady left the room; Pauline, who was determined to have her own way, remained in bed; the lessons began without her; and no one asked any questions concerning her. Towards noon, Marian went up to her cousin's room, and persuaded her to rise, that she might be ready for dinner. Hunger finally prevailed, and, with Marian's assistance, Pauline was prepared to make her appearance at the dinner-table. But there nothing pleased her; she turned up her nose and laid down her spoon; she announced that she was not accustomed to such food, and

asked for wine or beer. She was told there was nothing on the table to drink except water; the decanter stood before her, and she could take as much as she liked.

Thus did Pauline find at every turn something which displeased her. She avoided the other girls, ridiculing their clothes and their manners; if they asked her to join in their games and share their pleasures, she turned her back upon them in contempt, and soon none troubled themselves concerning the discontented girl, whose whims and ill-humor became daily more and more unendurable. She wrote to her mother, bitterly bewailed her miserable condition, and begged to be taken back to K—.

The Councillor's lady could not indeed comply with this demand, as her husband was inexorable; but to console her daughter as much as lay in her power, she sent her secretly, from time to time, sundry dainties which were all privately consumed. All Madame Heinau's efforts to improve the spoiled child were fruitless; so much the more joy, however, did the worthy lady experience from the progress and

amiability of Marian, who was a universal favorite, through the goodness of her heart, and who soon outstripped all her companions in their studies.

C H A P T E R I V.

THE CHOLERA.

ONE day, about two years after Pauline's departure from her home, she received a letter sealed with black. It was from her father, and contained the melancholy announcement of her sister's death. Elmira had been ill only nine days, and had finally fallen a victim to nervous fever. The Councillor added, that he found himself too solitary without either of his children, and therefore wished Pauline to return. He hoped she would enter her father's house a totally altered being, and this hope alone could afford him any consolation under his late heavy loss. Marian would of course accompany her.

Never did a young girl display so little sorrow on the occasion of an only sister's death, as did Pauline.

"Are you crying?" said she to Marian; "what folly! Rather rejoice, for now we will leave this horrible place. And don't you think black will be very becoming to me? O now I shall have Elmira's gold watch, and her gold chain, and the splendid diamond earrings which used to make her look so fine!"

Amid similar heartless speeches did Pauline finish the packing of her trunk,—an effort of which, under other circumstances, she would have fancied herself utterly incapable. However, she did not fail to cry out every few moments, "Marian, bring me this!" and "Marian, bring me that!" while the good-natured little girl patiently performed all the services required from her.

Although Madame Heinau was very sorry to part with Marian, she could not help feeling delighted at the prospect of being delivered from the presence of Pauline, the torment of the school. She at first intended writing to the Councillor, and informing him how little her efforts had been able to effect with the character and habits of his daughter; but when she reflected how painful such an an-

nouncement would be under the present circumstances, she abandoned her design, and left the discovery of the truth to time and occasion.

The Councillor received his daughter in the warmest manner. " You are now my only child!" said he sadly, as he pressed her to his bosom ; the tears filling his eyes and flowing down over his cheeks prevented his observing the coldness with which his caresses were received. Marian threw herself weeping into her aunt's arms ; the good lady sobbed aloud, overcome by this evidence of heartfelt sympathy. As soon as the Councillor perceived his wife's agitation, he made an effort to control himself, that he might turn the current of her thoughts.

" How you have improved!" said he to his niece ; " the country air has done you a great deal of good ; you are much changed for the better!"

" Do you not think, too," said the Councillor's lady, " that she is very like her father?"

" As like as two peas!" answered the husband. " They say," added he, " that daughters

who resemble their fathers are born to good fortune!" After a short pause, he turned to Pauline, and said: "But you have not yet lost your sickly complexion; I ought to have left you longer at Blenden. But my house was so empty,—and my heart. If one has groaned through the whole day under a press of unpleasant business, one desires at least the privilege of passing the evening in the society of those for whom one has labored during the day. Pauline! for you alone does your father now torment himself; for you alone does he work from early until late; in you does he hope for the consolation of his old age! Will you—can you disappoint him?"

Pauline shook her head in silence. Her father confided in her promise, and immediately after left the room, in compliance with a sign made by a servant, who had entered unobserved, and who was seeking a spare moment to communicate some intelligence, evidently not very agreeable, judging from the expression of his face.

The Councillor did not return until many hours after. One might easily see that some-

thing disagreeable had occurred to him, for he walked uneasily up and down the room, rapped on the barometer, noted carefully the state of the atmosphere, and finally seated himself beside his wife on the sofa, whence he was first obliged to lift sundry articles of clothing, thrown there by Pauline.

"What is the matter, dear husband?" asked the wife gently. "You seem so much excited!"

"Alas!" he replied, "I could not have believed it possible that the actual appearance of an evil we have so long awaited with certainty would have so disturbed me. But such is human nature; first we are alarmed concerning a danger still remote, and look with horror upon its nearer approach; but its vicinity soon becomes less fearful, for even fear wears itself out; and when at last the evil is in our midst, loud and panic-stricken are the cries. Thus is it now with the citizens of our dear city. When the cholera broke out in Moscow, what a commotion it made! Any one who coolly observed the ways of the people, must surely have thought them all gone mad. This and that must not be tasted; the

whole house must be fumigated, as if it were already filled with plague patients; perfumed bags must be worn round the neck, besides a hundred other follies. All that lasted a few months. But as the formidable enemy still lingered on the way, such precautions became tedious. Then every one ate fruit and cucumbers, drank his beer gayly, and threw the little bags, which a short time before you would have supposed were so many amulets, into the fire. Now, however, the cholera is fairly here; like a thief in the night has it come upon us, and we are in great trouble; so that it is not wonderful I should have somewhat lost my balance, especially as I have been troubled by many other cares. Old Dunning, over the way, has been prophesying it a long time. He fancied that the wounded Poles who were brought over the frontier to our hospital would bring the cholera with them; but it is now three months since they first came, and as yet they have felt no pains except such as were occasioned them by the Russians. But now the old fellow's clerk, who never put his foot inside of the hospital

once during his whole life, has been attacked by the cholera. Since then it has broken out in several other houses, and our physicians, who are such heroes when they talk, have all lost their senses."

"Certainly not our family physician, Doctor Selter!" interrupted the Councillor's lady; "he is a reasonable man, who will doubtless show himself upon this occasion a skilful and active personage."

"Ha! ha!" replied the Councillor; "Selter indeed! He is just the one: I know him well! Did I not always tell you so? Selter is a boaster, who understands nothing except how to put himself forward, and to make a great fuss over his own achievements! How bravely he talked when the discourse chanced to fall upon the cholera! How often he repeated, 'A physician should always be ready to sacrifice his own life for the benefit of his fellow-citizens!' besides an abundance of similar heroic phrases. I wish, dear wife, you had been at old Dunning's this morning, and then you would have had an opportunity of beholding the hero in all his glory. The

judge sent for me to see his clerk, who was very ill. As soon as we thought we recognized the symptoms of cholera, which we had so often heard described, Selter, who is Dunning's family physician, was sent for; without, however, giving him any intimation of the real state of the case. The doctor probably fancied himself invited to drink a glass of porter, (a pleasant surprise which Dunning had often prepared for him,) as he came at once, without delay. But this time he was destined to be bitterly deceived; for no sooner had he entered the house than he was greeted with the astounding intelligence, which seemed to him a real thunder-stroke. As the judge said, 'Be quick, my friend, for I think my clerk has the cholera,' he stepped up to Selter, and was about to clap him on the shoulder in his usual hearty manner. But our doctor held out both hands to warn him off, turned as pale as death, and seemed stiffening, like Lot's wife, into a pillar of salt. He finally recovered his senses, gave us a wild glance, and we could scarcely believe our eyes when we saw him turn his back upon us, and run away as if the

fiends were after him. Before we could recover from our astonishment he returned, but so altered that we scarcely knew him. His head was enveloped in a kind of cerecloth helmet, through which his eyes alone could be distinguished; and although it is by no means cold to-day, he had put on his over-coat and buttoned it up to his chin. My neighbor looked at me in astonishment, and as we could not divine the meaning of all this mummery, we both burst out into a loud laugh. But we soon fathomed the mystery. Selter strode slowly and gravely towards the room in which the clerks sleep, and beckoned us to follow him. We did so in silence and expectancy; but the comedy only reached its height when we stood by the sick man's bed, for the doctor seemed afraid to touch him. I really believe Selter would have preferred feeling the patient's pulse with his long walking-stick, had I not been by to whisper a couple of friendly words in his ear. You see, dear wife, what we are to expect from our doctors; were it not for the two physicians attached to the Polish regiment, I fear

our poor citizens would fare but badly. I must confess they are both worthy and skilful men; for no sooner had I imparted to them the necessities of our case, than they were ready and willing to aid us in every possible way. Our doctors must soon grow ashamed of their unworthy behavior, more especially as they have been in the habit of sneering at the two strangers, and calling them quacks. But now comes the kernel of my long speech! We will not fear, and will commend ourselves to the care of our merciful Heavenly Father. Only remain quietly in the house. I have a number of letters to write, which I can no longer delay; I will return to you as soon as I have finished."

Whoever has lived through a cholera season will remember the excitement produced in every family by the many victims stricken by the plague in all ranks of society, and by the endless precautions which both physicians and the police considered it necessary to enforce. Such a one will readily conceive the attention with which the Councillor's relation was listened to, and that, even without his

express command, no one would have felt any desire to leave the house.

Pauline was the first to break the silence, saying: "I cannot conceive how father can find so much to say about such a trifle!"

"A trifle!" cried the mother, horrified. "Child, beware of sin! God might punish you for such thoughtless words. But you are pardonable, for, in the retirement from which you have just issued, you could have no opportunity of learning the numbers who have already fallen before the fell destroyer."

"Well, what of that?" replied Pauline, indifferently; "suppose a few thousand men should die, there will be plenty left in the world,—yes indeed, too many!"

"But you forget," said Marian, in a tone of gentle reproach, "how precious life is to every one! Only think of the unspeakable misery occasioned in a household by the death of a kind father or a tender mother! And you,—are you willing to die?"

"I?" replied Pauline quickly, "why not? What do I possess so delightful in this world that I should wish to remain in it? I begged

mother only a few minutes since to buy me a pink satin dress to wear to the parties next winter; she refused me, and yet Elmira had just such a one two years ago."

"Elmira," said the mother sadly, "was so simple and so modest in all her desires. Her father surprised her with the dress on her birthday; but she never would wear it because she thought it too costly for her, and now the poor child's coffin is lined with it. If your happiness depends upon the possession of such a dress, you shall have it; I only refused you because you cannot lay your mourning off so soon,—if only for the sake of opinion."

"What do I care for opinion?" exclaimed Pauline. "People may talk as they like: it is nothing to me. If the heart is only dark, why should one wear black clothes? You know that, when I have worn a dress three times, I hate it, and now I must wear the same one during several months! No indeed,—that will I not do."

Humming a tune, she stepped up to the mirror, stroked the hair back from her low

forehead, and surveyed on all sides her little, graceless person.

"I do not think black is so becoming to me as I at first fancied it would be!" cried she finally. "I once read in a novel, that a woman never looked more interesting than when she was dressed in mourning! What is your opinion, Marian? Do you like black?"

Marian's eyes filled with tears. After a short inward struggle, she replied: "I can scarcely remember ever to have seen my dear mother in any other dress; my dearest memories are consequently so connected with that color, that I prefer it to all others."

Pauline smiled contemptuously. She then went for her sister's jewel casket, and tried on all the ornaments successively before the glass. Although the mother's heart must have bled, as this proceeding recalled to her memory the daughter who had been taken from her, and whose character presented so striking a contrast to that of the child still left her, she did not refrain from making signs of admiration and approval as Pauline from time to time

glanced towards her for applause. Marian quietly dried her eyes and left the room.

“She is envious, mother!” said Pauline. “I would willingly give her my old ear-rings, but the stupid little creature does not know how to wear such things!”

C H A P T E R V.

CLOUDS.

AFTER a few days of great anxiety, the alarm occasioned by the vicinity of the cholera subsided, and the Councillor's household returned to their accustomed occupations. Pauline passed her time before the mirror, or lay on the sofa yawning over romances, or, her most usual employment, did nothing. Marian, on the contrary, devoted her hours to the acquirement of knowledge, and the manual labor necessary to the maintenance of a decent appearance. She rose before six o'clock, and the first hours of the morning were devoted to serious studies. Her books, some of which she had purchased with her own savings, while others were gifts from her adoptive parents, were her dearest friends;

and when she needed deeper consolation, she found it in the Book of all books, the Bible left her by her mother, which ever stood at the top of her little collection. The remaining portion of the forenoon was passed in sewing ; she made nearly all her own clothes, and thereby incurred the contempt of Pauline, who evidently scorned the result of her efforts.

But when noon came, she hastened to her piano; for in music did she find her greatest source of enjoyment. She was gifted with a peculiar talent for that most ethereal of the arts, and often surprised her master with her quickness and ability. She played with facility the more difficult compositions which he placed before her, and could remember any melody once heard, however briefly. The Councillor's lady was heartily delighted at the talent displayed by her niece, and one day said to her daughter: "I have heard many concerts, announced in the most high-sounding terms, and many difficult airs performed by the most celebrated singers, but they always left me cold ; while the most simple melody, played or sung by Marian,

touches my heart, and I often go into the adjoining room to listen while she studies."

The Councillor had changed much during a short time; and one could scarcely impute the alteration in his looks and habits to the cholera alone. He passed nearly the whole day in his counting-house or in his new sugar-factory; and when he did occasionally enter his wife's sitting-room, he would only remain a few moments, walking up and down with folded arms, and rarely uttering a single syllable. He became thin and gray; his hitherto favorite occupations seemed to annoy him, especially the perusal of his newspapers, which had once afforded him so much pleasure. His wife was also rendered very anxious by the information brought her by the clerks, that they frequently found Mr. Werner asleep at his desk, a thing which had never before occurred to her busy husband.

He made no difference between the young girls, as to his treatment of them; and although Pauline frequently gave proofs of her unchanged character, he never reproved her; either he did not wish to see, or he really did

not see. He seemed to find his only recreation in listening to Marian, when she would sometimes read aloud to him in the evening. Pauline fancied this a token of preference, and endeavored in various ways to wreak her displeasure upon her gentle cousin's head. She never spoke to her except in a tone of command, and required from her many services which she had previously demanded from servants only; or she would spoil the favorite noontide hours, by bringing a great poodle-dog and her Canary-bird into the parlor where Marian practised. The poodle could not bear music, and set up a terrific howl, while the bird sang with all its shrill little might, and Pauline laughed loudly at the divine concert, as she called it.

Madame Werner would sometimes reprove her daughter for her unamiable conduct, but was too weak to undertake seriously to correct her. Marian thought of her own dear and loving mother, and bore all patiently and silently.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PEARL OF PEARLS.

THUS passed the autumn and the winter, until the quickening breath of spring once more awoke the earth from its torpor, melting the silvery icy veils covering valley, plain, and stream, and changing them into bright carpets of emerald, adorned with fair blossoms of every shade and hue. The clear dew-drops hanging from the flowers glittered like pearls, or gleamed like diamonds in the sunlight, as the morning breeze shook them from their nestling-places in the gentle bosoms of those lovely children of the spring, on which many a mortal casts down jealous glances, and envies in his heart their happy lot. And how truly fortunate are these tender children of the spring! They sleep softly

and without care on the tender bosom of Nature, that loving mother, until the ever-returning, inexhaustible stream of life again flows through their veins ; the west-wind floats gently round their lovely heads, and should a rude norther fell them and pitilessly destroy their beauty, they are followed by many a wail of sympathy and pity to their untimely graves, whence they again, after a few short moons, arise exulting in renewed strength and loveliness.

The cholera still raged, although with somewhat abated force, among the citizens of K——. The eighth part of the population had already fallen victims to the fearful malady, which still daily demanded new offerings, and the fathers yet embraced their dear ones every evening with tearful eyes, fearing lest the sword of the death-angel might fall upon some beloved head before the breaking of another dawn. All shuddered, and left the windows when they heard the well-known muffled bell, announcing the passage of the sick to the new hospitals which had been erected, the old no longer sufficing to contain those stricken by the disease.

The undertakers were occupied from morning until night, and again from night till morning, in nailing together the few planks needed by man for his last couch. The lusty company of grave-diggers turned up the earth like busy ants, but, with all their efforts, failed to provide separate graves for the dead. A great ditch was then dug, in which the coffins were placed side by side, strewed with lime, and again covered by another tier of the same melancholy receptacles; while the earth finally spread her friendly mantle over all, concealing the horrors beneath. The schools were closed; few ventured abroad, even to the churches, through fear of contagion; and in the streets were found many half-naked children bewailing the loss of their parents. But in vain did the poor little creatures seek for some alleviation of their misery; in vain did they weep, and ask only for bread to satisfy the pangs of hunger: each one seemed so absorbed in the duty of self-preservation, that charity was forgotten, and the majority closed both their hearts and their doors. They shunned the vicinity of the mourners, as if the air they

breathed must be an infallible poison, and their approach certain death.

The medical men fled the sick for whose benefit they should have labored, and only the two physicians attached to the Polish regiment remained to bear assistance from house to house. They seemed to attach but little value to their own lives, and were ready to offer them in payment for the kindness with which their wounded countrymen had been received in K——. God seemed to bless their zeal and their noble conduct, for they succeeded in restoring many, who were apparently hopelessly lost, to the bosom of their agonizing families, and continued steadfastly to resist the contagion, which fatigue and exhaustion must have rendered fatal to less powerful constitutions. It was they who first observed how necessary it was to find work for so many day-laborers thrown out of employment, and shelter for the poor orphans. To this end they called upon our friend the Councillor, whose word possessed great weight with his fellow-citizens. He would certainly have sooner felt the necessity

of some exertion, had not his whole attention been absorbed by the state of his own affairs. But these did not render him deaf to the request which was now made to him, and at a meeting of the most enterprising among the citizens he made several propositions, one of which was adopted and carried into execution. There was quite a large square which had been bought by the city, several years before, after a fire, and which still lay an unoccupied waste; this was to be cleared of all rubbish, and turned into a public garden, at the common expense. Mr. Werner headed the subscription list with a considerable sum, and his example being followed by many others, the necessary fund was soon raised, and the work began immediately. The little orphans were also temporarily provided for.

Many noble ladies joined together and formed a society for this purpose; they received money and other gifts for the use of the little ones, and attended to their proper distribution. A large dwelling was hired, in which the friendless children were received; two good old women were employed to pre-

pare wholesome food, and the kind benefactresses soon had the pleasure of seeing their little charges revive, under the care and attention bestowed upon them. Muslin and cheap stuffs were also purchased, and there was no dearth found of willing hands to make up both under and over garments. Marian, among the rest, relinquished the pleasant occupations with which she had been wont to fill up her hours, and sewed industriously from morning till night. Even her piano remained unopened, and only sometimes, during the hour of twilight, would her skilful fingers draw forth gentle tones, which flowed into tender melodies.

One day, Marian, accompanied by Pauline, entered the old housekeeper's room; the former carried a whole piece of coarse material, such as the country people weave from woollen yarn, and, spreading it upon the table, said: "Dear Mrs. Wilnevitt, will you not have the kindness to aid me a little? This stuff is intended for clothes for boys from five to six years old, and I do not know how I am to cut them out."

“ Yes, my heart, very willingly ! ” replied the old lady, carefully wiping her spectacles, without which she could no longer sew. She then drew a large pair of shears from her pocket, chalked out a pattern, and soon a little suit was in readiness to be made up. Pauline stood near with folded arms, her head bent down towards her shoulder, and laughed scornfully as the housekeeper gave Marian minute directions how the various parts of the garment were to be put together.

“ Perhaps you would like to help too, Miss Pauline ? ” said the old woman good-naturedly.

“ Not I, indeed ! ” cried Pauline, laying her hand upon the coarse cloth ; “ I am sure it would break my fingers. No, such work was not meant for me ! It only suits those,” she continued, casting a contemptuous glance towards Marian,—“ it only suits those who have never been accustomed to anything better.”

At that moment a deep sigh was heard. All looked up in astonishment ; the Councillor stood in the open door-way. He slowly approached Marian, and pressed her to his heart. Then, turning to his daughter, he

gazed long and sadly upon her, and finally said: "Thoughtless child! if you only knew how you tear my heart! I have so often warned and besought,—yes, even punished you,—all in vain. It is now too late! You will be forced to undergo bitter, most bitter experiences, and your old father will go down with sorrow to his grave."

His manly form tottered as he left the little room; Pauline soon followed him. Marian laid her head on the old housekeeper's shoulder, and wept. The latter endeavored to soothe and comfort the young girl, saying: "Only trust in God; he will do all things well. Something is amiss with the master, I am sure of that. I always shook my head when they told me what venturesome speculations he entered into; all may hang upon a silken thread, and if that breaks, then is all over with him. You know his chamber is near mine; I often hear him pacing up and down the whole night. Sometimes he will be quiet a few moments, and then again begins his restless course; and if I meanwhile fall asleep, the sound of his footsteps is sure to be the first

that greets my ear when I awake. You may be quite sure some heavy care is pressing upon him."

"Do you really believe that my uncle's whole property is at stake? I have always heard he was very rich."

"That is true," replied the old woman; "but even the deepest springs run dry sometimes. But God can aid him too; it is always time enough to mourn when the evil has come upon us. And even if the worst comes, you are provided for; you can sew so beautifully, and you play the piano so finely,—ah, you can never want! But Miss Pauline, who is always so proud, who never puts the end of her little finger into cold water, and who scorns all labor as beneath her dignity,—it will go very hard with her! When she has laid aside her state, then will she first know how much she is really worth; for now the greater number honor her only for her silk dress, or her diamond ear-rings, or perhaps for her father's money-bags which they see shining in the background."

The great clock in the hall struck ten, and

Marian rose to depart, saying: "It is ten o'clock, and I must go, for our instruction with the pastor begins at eleven, and it will be some time before Pauline is ready."

"Leave your cloth here awhile," said Mrs. Wilnevitz; "I have but little to do to-day in the kitchen, and I will make you one little suit to serve as a pattern."

Marian thankfully accepted this kind offer, and said: "Alas! there must still be much suffering, notwithstanding all that has been done to alleviate it. Who among us take the trouble to seek out the unfortunate creatures dwelling in the little huts, where doubtless many die from mere want? And the retiring and modest,—who takes care for them? There is scarcely enough to aid even all those who apply.—What can have become of old Mrs. Neubach," she continued, turning round upon the threshold; "she used to come every Monday for the money which I gave her weekly, and now I have not seen her for three weeks. I feel quite uneasy, and you would do me a great favor, Mrs. Wilnevitz, if you could find out where she is."

So saying, Marian left the room.

On the following Sunday the two girls were confirmed. Pauline's costume, which was by no means suited to the solemn occasion, attracted the observation of all the spectators; Marian wore a black dress, her only ornament being the pearls left her by her mother. Her tears flowed fast as the pastor, laying his hand upon her head, blessed her and said:—

“ You are an orphan; your parents sleep in the cold grave, but their glorified spirits look down from heaven lovingly upon you, their dear child. They rejoice in your pure and pious life, and will be your intercessors before the throne of God. O never forget your God! He is your best protector, your ever kind and merciful father; in him must you place your entire confidence. Should your path in life lay amid flowers, you must humbly thank the Giver of all good gifts; and should it be rude and beset with thorns, then must you hope in Him who will surely guide you to your own greatest good and happiness.”

The worthy man ceased, and, turning to Pauline, said: “ You have felt none of the

sorrows which have already at so early an age grieved the heart of your adopted sister. Fortune smiled upon you in your cradle, and you have enjoyed all that could make life delightful. Should you not find in the blessings surrounding you, bestowed upon you by your Heavenly Father, a solemn and earnest incentive to honor his gifts through a faithful fulfilment of the vow you have made this day in the presence of so many witnesses ? Should you not feel bound to share the manifold blessings so abundantly poured upon you with those who are wanting in the means of existence ? The authors of your being hope to find in their only child the comfort and consolation of their old age. O never let this hope be in vain ! I beseech you as your teacher, and as a friend to whom your welfare is very dear!"

Pauline listened coldly to these words ; and coldly did she lie in her parents' arms, when, in speechless emotion, they pressed their only daughter to their hearts. Marian, with every sign of the deepest gratitude, kissed the hands of the benefactors who had hitherto bestowed upon her so many proofs of their affection.

"My good girls!" cried the Councillor, involuntarily, as he gazed upon the pair with sorrowful eyes; "O if you were only provided for, how peacefully would I look forward into the future!"

When Marian opened her chamber door, she was greeted by a stream of the richest perfumes. The little room had been changed into a green bower, lilacs, narcissus blossoms, and hyacinths hung in wreaths, wound upon slender birch boughs, adorning the walls, while the ceiling was covered with flowers and green twigs; on her work-table lay her mother's Bible, still open as she had left it in the morning, but decked with evergreens, while behind it stood a tall myrtle-tree, with innumerable shining blossoms. Marian folded her hands and looked on in amazement, while the old housekeeper advanced from the corner in which she had hidden herself, the better to enjoy the good child's surprise.

"O how beautiful it is!" cried Marian, as she thankfully embraced the old woman, in whose eyes bright tears were shining. "You have changed my room into a real fairy

palace: a thousand, thousand thanks! And this lovely myrtle-tree which you have always so carefully tended, is it also intended for me?"

"Yes!" replied Mrs. Wilnevitz; "and may it flourish ever more and more under your care. I had just such another tree," continued the old woman. "Both were planted on the same day. But from the other I cut the death crown for Elmira, and it has since withered. If our good God had only left her to us, and taken in her stead the other sister, who only lives to plague herself and every one else!—But of course He must know best!—Yes, just what I was about to say myself; this tree must be more fortunate than its twin-sister, and you must weave your bridal wreath from its branches,—promise me that!"

Marian smiled as she offered her hand in token of agreement. After a pause, she said, as if speaking to herself: "The tree will long bloom in peace before the shears mar its beauty. Who will choose so poor a maiden as a wife?"

"Your mother was also a poor orphan, and

yet she found a husband whom many envied her," replied the old woman to the half-involuntary question of the young girl. "God leads his own in wondrous ways! But now, before I forget it, I have a piece of news for you."

"What?" asked Marian, surprised.

"You gave me recently a commission to find out Mrs. Neubach, who washed for our household many years ago, and whom you have lately aided from your own means."

"Well, have you succeeded?"

"Yes, my good child; but I have nothing very cheering to communicate. The old woman worked as long as she could; when too feeble to wash, she spun for strangers. That is but a poor way of earning one's bread, yet it sufficed to procure her the necessaries of life. But now her daughter and her son-in-law are both dead of the cholera; the two eldest children died at the same time, leaving still seven behind, of whom the eldest is only twelve years old. Three have been received into the new asylum, but the other four are with their grandmother, who is now lying ill

with a fever. No one could adequately describe their state of want and destitution."

"O I can fancy it all!" cried Marian, shuddering; "and they must be helped at once. Only tell me how to find the old woman's house, and I will go to her; for I must see with my own eyes of what the wretched family stand most in need."

In vain did Mrs. Wilnevitz seek to dissuade Marian from this design: she even promised to go herself and bring the most accurate intelligence as to the condition of the poor creatures, but the young girl was still unsatisfied.

"Only let me do as I wish!" said Marian, imploringly, but in a tone which showed that nothing could shake her resolution. "I will go in the evening, that I may be more sure of escaping recognition."

She listened attentively while Mrs. Wilnevitz described as nearly as possible the poor widow's dwelling, which was situated in a distant suburb, the chief indication of its locality consisting in the fact of its being near the entrance of an old churchyard, long since in disuse.

Completely enveloped in a dark shawl and simple bonnet, Marian left the house at a late hour in the afternoon. She hoped not to be missed at home, as she had begged permission to absent herself from the company assembled at Pauline's request in honor of the occasion, that she might pass the evening in quiet reflection in her own room.

If she met any one whom she knew, she drew her bonnet more closely about her face, at the same moment quickening her steps, until she finally stood before the wall of the old churchyard. She looked over it. Several children, whose nakedness was scarcely covered by a few miserable rags, played before the door of a low, dilapidated tenement.

"That must be the place!" said she to herself. "I cannot be mistaken. Dear child," asked she gently of one of the children, "does old Mrs. Neubach live here?"

"My grandmother? Yes, she lives here!" replied the child, gazing curiously upon the stranger. "Go into the room there, if you would like to speak with her."

Marian opened the only door that was to

be seen ; but the heat within was so stifling, that she was at first doubtful whether she had not better retrace her steps. The firm will, however, conquered, and holding her handkerchief before her mouth and nose, she gazed round with a searching glance. The room contained but little furniture. A monstrous brick stove occupied a large share of the empty space ; near it stood an old-fashioned bed with a tester, hung with green and white striped curtains ; these were partially drawn back, and the sick woman lay within their folds, while a girl of twelve years old sat upon the edge of the bed, and read aloud the following passages from the Holy Scriptures :—

“ Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment ?

“ Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns ; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not of much more value than they ? And for raiment why are you solicitous ? Consider

the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin.

“ And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith ! ”

Marian quietly awaited the end of the reading, and then, throwing aside her hat and shawl, suddenly stood before the astonished old woman, to whom she offered her hand in the most affectionate manner.

“ God be praised ! ” cried Marian, “ that you still live ; I hope I have come in time to aid you.”

“ O my dear young lady ! ” said, in a faint voice, the sick woman, who had recognized Marian at the first glance, “ now that I see you, I feel my strength renewed. God’s angels have surely led you here to save me and my poor grandchildren from starvation.”

“ Is it indeed thus with you ? ” sighed Marian. “ But, first of all, you must have some fresh air. The evening is so mild, so heavenly ; I will open the window, and close the door, so that you will feel no draught.”

After much trouble, she finally succeeded in opening one of the shutters; a wild apple-tree stood before the window, whose wide-spread branches shut out all view into the distance; but the mild air streamed in most refreshingly, and after inhaling a few draughts of the invigorating atmosphere, Marian returned to the sick woman's bedside.

"Get up, Anna!" said the latter to her grandchild, "and let Miss Marian sit down."

The child obeyed, and the old woman related all the misfortunes which had lately fallen upon them, together with the particulars of her illness. Marian soon remarked that her malady consisted chiefly in great weakness, and felt convinced that wholesome food and some strengthening medicine would soon restore her. She gave Anna money to buy food for the present, and then, leaning her head against the bed-post, began to consider what means she possessed of materially aiding the necessities of the wretched family. But as she reflected, her brow darkened, her lips trembled, and her eyes filled with tears. She had nothing more to give: all the orna-

ments and costly presents she had received from her adoptive parents had been sold, and the money placed in the treasury of the Charity Union, no one having the slightest suspicion whence these offerings came.

In vain did she consider: no means of raising the needful sum occurred to her, and a light sigh escaping from her lips seemed to ask the question, "Why am I so poor?"

To conceal her trouble from the sick woman, Marian rose, approached the window, and, folding her hands across her breast, looked anxiously up to heaven. The setting sun reminded her of her mother's last hours; she leaned her head against the window-frame, and in so doing loosed from her neck the pearls which she had worn on that day for the first time. They fell at her feet, and she stooped to pick them up; deep in thought, she shifted them from one hand to the other, while the feelings which struggled in her soul played upon her beautiful, regular features.

"You wore them on your wedding-day, dear mother," said she at length, softly speak-

ing to herself. " You gave them to me when your eyes were already darkening in the night of death. You said, ' Here is your only inheritance ! ' — My only one ? Have I not the Bible and your wedding-ring ? " So saying, she kissed the ring.

" Should I, or should I not ? " asked she of herself doubtfully, after a pause, during which she sadly gazed upon the beautiful ornament, and then continued in a somewhat louder tone : " These pearls look to me like shining tears strung upon a thread ; they are your tears, mother ! those bitter tears shed for my poor father, whom you loved better than your life. ' May these pearls bring you only happiness and good fortune ! ' — those were your very words, and shall I give them away ? But will not the thought of having rescued these unfortunates render me happy ? What greater bliss can the world offer than this blessed feeling in the depths of the soul ? Will not my dying mother's wish thus meet with its best fulfilment ? Yes, I will give them up ! " cried she suddenly. " You would have done likewise, mother ; and to resemble

you is your daughter's most earnest desire and never-ceasing effort."

Marian at this moment heard a rustling near the window; two men stood before her. She shrank back affrighted. Both, however, saluted her courteously as they passed by, and a second later entered the little room. Marian breathed more freely as she recognized in the first-comer the honored pastor at whose hands she had that very day made the public confession of her faith; she hastened to greet him, and sank into his extended arms.

"The seed fell upon good ground!" cried the clergyman, after a pause, during which he gazed upon the young girl in speechless emotion. "Do not be angry with me, my daughter, that I overheard you. This afternoon I accidentally learned the misery into which this family, well known to me by name, had fallen. I determined, as soon as my engagements would permit, to come myself and inquire into the truth of what had been told me. Just as I was about passing the window with my companion, a voice fell upon my ear; I

was sure it must be your's, for I would know it among a thousand. I involuntarily stood still, hidden from you by the tree; and thus did I become a witness to your struggle, and overheard the offering you were about to make on the altar of charity. Yes, give it away, your only inheritance, whose worth can be reckoned in pieces of gold or silver; you still bear ever within you a far higher and nobler, — your mother's virtues."

At these words, he touched the young girl's forehead lightly with his lips. "And now," continued he, "give me the pearls which must have acquired a double value in your eyes; I will sell them for you, for you could not do so yourself without exciting observation or suspicion. Come to my house to-morrow at this hour, and I will return you an account of my stewardship. But now, my dear child, you must hasten home, that you may reach your dwelling before dark. I would willingly return with you, but I have yet a long way to go ere the day is done."

"Will you not permit me to accompany you?" asked a fine, manly voice, in an imploring tone.

Marian blushed deeply as she looked up; the voice reminded her that she was not alone with the clergyman. Her eyes fell upon the tall, slender figure of a young man who could not have numbered more than four-and-twenty years; his open countenance was flushed with the glow of perfect health; his half-parted lips showed teeth of dazzling whiteness, and his large, dark eyes rested upon Marian's face with so admiring an expression, that she dropped hers in confusion upon the ground.

"Will you go with him, my child?" asked the clergyman. Marian gently shook her head. "Very well, as you will; I understand and honor your delicacy. Never mind, Eugene! It is not yet too late for a young girl to venture out alone; in a small town there is no need for the same caution as in a large one. Go then, my dear child, and may God's angels watch over you!"

Marian still held the pearls. "May your future possessor wear you only in happy hours!" said she softly, as she placed the ornament in the pastor's hand. She hastily

donned her hat and shawl, and bent over the sick woman to say farewell; but the old woman had fallen asleep, probably from exhaustion.

The young girl made a hurried courtesy to the two gentlemen, and then hastened home-wards. She threaded her way through the streets like a startled fawn, carefully avoiding all the passers-by. She only slackened her pace to be sure that she had not mistaken her way, and, after having verified her position, redoubled her pace to make up for lost time, without heeding her increasing fatigue. She reached her home at length, breathless and exhausted, softly opened a little side door, and, gliding past the lower apartments, whence proceeded the hum of many voices, entered her own room, and fell half fainting upon the sofa. Mrs. Wilnevitz soon after made her appearance.

"God be thanked," cried she, "that you are here! I felt very uneasy about you. I looked down the street for you a hundred times; but still you did not come. If I had only had time, I should have gone after you; but so

many unexpected guests arrived, that I have had my hands full preparing the necessary entertainment for them."

"I thank you heartily for your kindness!" replied Marian; "I feel quite overcome with my long walk, but still more with the fear I endured, for I never was out so late before in streets almost unknown to me."

"Did you find the widow's house?"

"Yes!"

"Was the old woman still alive?"

"Yes, and, with the help of God, will soon be entirely restored to health."

"I am heartily glad to hear it! But I know enough for to-day, and to-morrow you must tell me all about it, my dear young lady. Now lie down and sleep; I have made your bed in the little dressing-room, for I did not wish to throw away the flowers yet, and feared lest the strong perfume might injure you."

Marian followed this well-meant counsel, but it was long before she could find the desired repose. Gay songs resounded from the supper-room, and as her weary eyelids were at length about to close, in spite of the confused

noises which fell upon her ear, she was again thoroughly roused by a loud chorus singing "Vivats," probably in honor of her cousin.

"Good God," sighed she, "what a contrast! Yonder, sickness and sorrow, and here the most noisy rejoicings. And yet it may be that even here want may soon come upon us. Poor uncle, do you desire to deceive yourself through the splendor and display with which you now more than ever seek to be surrounded? Or do you desire to blind others to the abyss into which you are about to fall? O this thought torments me unceasingly! What torture to be forced to bury it in the secret recesses of my own bosom!"

In accordance with the pastor's request, Marian went to his house the next evening. She knocked twice at the door of his study, but received no answer; all was quiet; she did not venture to enter, and saw no one who could announce her. Suddenly, she heard some one speaking within, and the following words fell upon her ear:—

"I am truly sorry I cannot see her again,

and I confess that parting has become doubly painful to me. But I have her pearls, which I keep as a pledge that I shall one day again meet with her. Farewell, my true, paternal friend!"

The young girl started at the sound of that voice.

"Heavens! if any one were to see me here," thought she, "he would surely believe I intended to listen!" She laid her trembling hand on the latch, and the door flew open just as the pastor closed the one on the opposite side of the room. He was alone, and as soon as he perceived Marian standing upon the threshold, he welcomed her warmly, and made her sit down by him on the sofa.

"I have good news for you, my dear child," said he kindly; "your offering has proved a real mine. A rich man's son has bought the pearls, and paid for them double their value. I am then the recipient of a sum sufficient to relieve the poor family permanently from the fear of want. If you would trust me with the employment of the fund —"

"O, if you would only do it for me!" re-

plied Marian, quickly. "I should never have ventured to make a request involving so much trouble to you; but now that you are so kind as to make the proposition to me, I most thankfully accept it."

The clergyman informed her that he had employed a physician, and had also deemed it necessary to provide a nurse for the sick woman, because the eldest girl was too young and inexperienced to fulfil this duty properly, and, besides, her whole time was occupied in taking care of her younger brothers and sisters.

"I hope," he added, "that the old woman will soon be well enough to overlook her little household herself. She can labor, too, as much as she is able; but whenever she fails to supply her necessary wants, she shall again receive assistance."

"But she must not know," begged Marian, "whence comes the aid she has received; I will visit her again as soon as practicable, and continue to give her a trifle every week, as I have hitherto done, so that she may have no suspicion, in case she overheard any part of our conversation yesterday, which I scarcely

think possible, as she seemed to be fast asleep when I came away."

At these words, Marian arose, and giving her hand to the pastor, who accompanied her to the door, bade him farewell. She lingered a moment on the threshold; she would have been so glad to know the name of the young man whom she had met the day before, for she was convinced that he and the purchaser of the pearls were one and the same person. But her lips refused to ask the question, and she departed in silence.

C H A P T E R VII.

RETRIBUTION.

TIME passed on, and all fear of the pestilence vanished. The merciless ravager seemed glutted with victims, and had departed, but not without leaving behind many traces of its long and fearful presence. The city began to recover from its depression, and the young people especially seemed inclined to make up for their lost winter by heaping pleasure upon pleasure. A young lieutenant named Luderitz had assumed the post of master of the revels, and filled his office to the general satisfaction. First he arranged picnics to the various pretty villages in the neighborhood. The inhabitants beheld with astonishment long files of carriages approach, while in the distance resounded music, singing, and merry

laughter. Then, impelled by curiosity, many of the more idle among the community would go out and meet the joyful train, which, under the guidance of its leader, would soon find some lovely spot in the neighboring wood, where, having obtained permission from the village magistrates, the gay company would spend the day.

While the elder persons unpacked the eatables, the younger amused themselves in various ways. Large quantities of fagots were gathered and made into bonfires, whose white smoke rose to heaven like great pillars through which one might gaze undazzled upon the brightest sun. When the flames diminished, the young men proved their agility by leaping over them, and woe to him who showed himself timid or inexpert. Various lively games were played, or there was dancing on the green, or a trial of skill in archery, the victor being crowned with an oak wreath ; until finally the coming night would put an end to the festivities, and the careful mothers make preparations to return. But jests and jollity accompanied them on their homeward way,

and all confessed at parting that they had passed a most delightful day.

But they soon grew weary of picnics, and the following Sunday was destined to the essay of some new pleasure. Pauline Werner had informed her parents, a few days before, that she had selected Luderitz as her future husband.

The Councillor looked at his daughter in amazement. "Luderitz!" cried he. "Never! What have you to live on? He is as poor as a church mouse, and is besides a thoughtless fellow, who lives always in a whirl of excitement, and flies every serious occupation."

"I must have him!" said Pauline, abruptly and insolently.

"But you do not know, dear child," gently observed the mother, "whether the young man desires such a union!"

"Desires, indeed!" replied Pauline, glancing towards her cousin, who sat at the window, busily sewing; "what a question! He asked my consent long ago, and many others beside; but I give him the preference. He is young, handsome, and the only one in

whose society I never feel mortally weary, the only one who always knows how to entertain me pleasantly."

"Truly great and shining qualities!" remarked the Councillor, contemptuously. "Certainly no reasonable being could ask more from a husband!" So saying, he left the room, shaking his head.

But Pauline knew well how to carry out her own will. She tormented her mother from early until late, and, too weak to deny her only daughter anything, Mrs. Werner finally gave her consent, and promised to obtain her husband's. The poor Councillor, bowed down by many cares, yielded, as he had so often done of late, merely to restore peace and quiet to his household. "She will repent it!" were the only words he said upon the subject.

Thus approached the Sunday which Pauline had selected for the announcement of her engagement, which was to be kept a profound secret until that time. Nothing was known except that Lieutenant Luderitz had proposed a boating excursion, and that the Werner family had undertaken to receive the guests.

Six o'clock in the evening was the hour appointed for starting. A procession of gay people issued from the Councillor's house, proceeded to the river which ran through the town, and the place was soon reached whence the pleasure voyage was to begin. Several light boats, adorned with wreaths of green leaves and bright flowers, there awaited the guests. All, laughing, selected suitable places; the oarsmen, with snow-white shirt-sleeves, and deep crimson scarfs around their waists, pushed off and began to sing in chorus, keeping time with their oars. The evening was charming. The whole landscape seemed transfigured in the sunlight, and the pure blue of heaven was mirrored in the calm surface of the shining river. The air was so mild and soft, and the receding shores so lovely, that all eyes were turned to the contemplation of nature. This was a real trial to Pauline, who took little pleasure in such scenes, and who was forced to remark that her dress, on which she had expended so much thought and time, remained entirely unnoticed. In vain did she change her place several times, and even once affect

to be unwell ; she excited neither admiration nor sympathy, and in her ill-humor broke a favorite fan which had supplied her with occupation and fresh air during many a wearisome assembly. She was even dissatisfied with Luderitz, whom she fancied careless in his manner towards her, although he had never moved from her side, and had done his best to entertain her.

The boats finally landed on an island in the middle of the river, and a universal cry of astonishment escaped from the uninitiated. A large tent was erected in the midst, containing tables covered with refreshments ; joyful music greeted the guests, and many rockets shot whizzing through the air.

The Councillor alone seemed to take no share in the general rejoicing ; his melancholy voice accorded ill with the festive tones of those around him, and coldly did he receive the thanks of those who complimented him upon the tasteful arrangements. "No thanks to me," said he ; "Lieutenant Luderitz has been kind enough to take charge of everything." He was so abstracted that his wife

was obliged to remind him of the purpose for which they had come,—the announcement of his daughter's betrothal. He made it known in as few words as possible, and Marian, who observed him closely, fancied she saw tears in his eyes which she could not ascribe to a momentary emotion, while Pauline was receiving, in her peculiarly nonchalant manner, the congratulations of her friends. The party did not begin to think of returning until the moon had flooded the whole landscape with her silver light.

Pauline was thus betrothed, and her lover was forced from that day forward to decline all invitations to general parties of pleasure, because she announced that they no longer amused her. She would sometimes let him read aloud to her, or play cards with him in broad daylight; at length she fancied she would learn to ride, and soon no horse was swift enough to content her. She and Luderitz would ride through the streets of K—— at such a furious gallop, that his brother officers would often look after him in amazement, and loudly express their fears for the safety of their poor comrade's skull.

These mad rides, which no entreaties of the anxious mother could moderate, seemed to afford the greatest happiness to Pauline, and whoever then saw her would have believed her at the summit of her desires.

Who then can paint the astonishment of her parents, when she coolly announced to them one morning, that she was tired of her betrothed, and wished again to be free. All remonstrance was in vain.

The news soon spread through K—— that Luderitz had been dismissed, and that a poor candidate, who had until now earned his bread by giving lessons, rejoiced in the especial favor of the capricious lady. At first no one would believe the report, until finally Candidate Spe-
ner gave up his lessons, and removed to the Councillor's house. Pauline changed entirely her mode of life. No more riding or card-playing ! She stayed much at home, rose early, appeared sometimes in the kitchen, dressed more simply, and was occasionally seen with some feminine work in her hand. To improve her mind, she read books of travels with her betrothed, whose will was

ever hers, or she sometimes walked out with him, when he would strive to awaken her mind to a deeper feeling for the beauties of nature. All expressed astonishment at this wonderful change; the credulous mother indulged in brightest hopes, and secretly shed tears of joy; but the Councillor often shook his head in the most doubtful manner.

During all this time Marian devoted herself with increased zeal to her music. She had engaged an excellent master in harmony, and studied with the greatest patience; for she was not satisfied with the execution she had acquired through her previous practice; she desired to penetrate to the very depths of the divine art. She soon played well at sight, and made several successful attempts at composition.

Pauline had often before laughed at her cousin's efforts, and one day said to her: "One would really think you were striving to become an artist! But that will never be, for you are wanting in the natural gifts which no industry can supply. Believe me, little cousin, a good purse full of gold is worth

far more than such thriftless arts, which impose so many disagreeable duties in their acquisition. Must you not be the obedient servant of every lady who may deign to invite you to her house? Can you say, 'I will not!' when she asks you to favor the company by playing? O, I have often laughed to see you approach the piano so pale and trembling, with great drops of perspiration falling from your brow upon the keys, which would sigh so lamentably under the touch of your quivering fingers, that I would really be forced to yawn."

"I will strive to overcome this apparently ridiculous timidity," replied Marian, gently; "I know well how necessary it is. It is a weakness with which I have hitherto striven in vain; but surely a strong will must in time succeed in conquering such nervous fears."

Pauline had of late interfered but little with her cousin's occupations. Marian could now go out without any fear of finding her books and writing materials in disorder on her return. Her work-basket remained undisturbed, while formerly no article was safe;

there was a daily search for scissors, thimbles, &c., and whole hours were wasted in restoring the order which Pauline had in a few moments of angry haste destroyed. Marian often gazed with a certain shy veneration upon the modest candidate who had so suddenly wrought all these wonders.

One afternoon, as Marian was preparing to go out, Pauline rushed into her room.

"Where are you going, Marian?" asked she.

"I have an imperative errand!" was the indirect answer.

"But stay now and listen, for I have something to confide to you."

"To me?" cried Marian, astonished.

"Yes, to you!" answered her cousin, hastily. "I only wished to tell you that I can never marry Spener!"

"Never?" repeated Marian slowly in a low tone.

"No, no, never!" replied Pauline, indifferently. "But why do you make so solemn a face about it?" continued she; "what is there in that so very dreadful? Can you be deceived like all the rest? Ha, ha! the joke is

excellent! I really thought you knew me better than to believe it possible I could ever sacrifice my freedom for the sake of such a poor scholar. No indeed, I never even dreamed of such a thing!"

"But, great God!" asked Marian, who had not yet fully recovered from her surprise, "what then does the strange comedy signify which you have been playing off upon us in so masterly a manner?"

"That is soon told! I read a romance in which the heroine, a rich and noble maiden fell in love with a poor teacher, and in the end married him. I have tried the first part with great success; the last would be really too wearisome."

A noble indignation flushed Marian's cheeks. "And so you have all this time been making a fool of the poor young man!" said she. "O he was too good, far too good for that! How will he suffer when he learns that his heart has been made a plaything for a capricious young girl to jest with!"

"Well, let him!" replied Pauline. "It is only a proper punishment for his credulity."

"And are you not ashamed to say that to me?"

"I ashamed?—and before you? The idea is really preposterous!" cried Pauline, laughing.

Marian turned to leave the room, but her cousin held her back, saying: "Only stay a moment! I am often forced to hear how sensible you are; do show your sense then to-day, and give me some reasonable advice. My father is so strangely altered, so different from what he used to be;—you must have remarked it: he seems unwell; but mother always maintains the contrary. During the last week his malady appears to have increased; he often sits motionless upon his chair, leaves the work untouched which I never before knew him to neglect, and if any one speaks to him, he either makes no answer, or one wide of the mark. Mother weeps whenever she thinks no one is observing her. I am not backward, as you know; but I cannot somehow muster the courage to-day to go to my parents and say, I will not marry the candidate! And yet I must be rid of him, I

can bear his presence no longer. I cannot understand how I have so long endured the eternal tutoring of such a man."

" You have observed how much your father suffers," said Marian, reproachfully; " and yet you can be always preparing some new sorrow for him? O, if you would only follow my counsel, you would strive from henceforth to be really that which you have latterly, according to your own confession, only feigned to be. It is quite possible that you may meet with many severe trials,—and how will you bear them? Your heart, which confides in no divine and merciful Providence, will yield to despair at the first hard stroke of fortune."

" Be silent!" cried Pauline, angrily. " You may keep your wisdom to yourself. I know well that it is your greatest wish to see me really unhappy, for you are always predicting sorrow and want to me."

" I am only seeking to prepare you in case of need!" replied Marian, quietly. So saying, she put on her bonnet, which she held in her hand, and left the room.

Most sad were the thoughts which filled her

mind as she walked to Mrs. Neubach's dwelling, which she had of late rarely visited, her time being fully occupied by her various occupations. But her melancholy yielded to more joyful feelings when she reached the end of her journey. The little hut was scarcely recognizable, so much had it changed since the first time she had stepped over its threshold. The dilapidated walls had been repaired; the roof, newly thatched; and the little room, with its sanded floor, looked as comfortable and cheerful as heart could desire. As Marian entered, the old woman, who sat in the corner spinning, rose to greet her.

"It is very kind in you, my dear young lady, to come and see how we are doing!" said she. "My Anna was right; she thought you would come to-day, and she has spent the whole morning in sweeping and dusting, and setting the things to rights."

"Where are the children?" asked Marian.

"Behind the house in the potato patch; they are digging out the potatoes, and I go every now and then to help, or to be quite sure they leave none in the ground. If you

will take the trouble to step into the next chamber, you can see through the window how busily they are working."

Marian preferred to go out into the garden, and see the children there: she talked with them a long time, rejoicing over their healthy appearance, and neat clothing; she was especially pleased with the sensible answers of the eldest girl.

"She goes to school every day," said Mrs. Neubach, evidently gratified by the praise bestowed on her grandchild; "it would be a great shame if she did not learn, when the pastor himself has so recently given her such good advice and kind encouragement. Do you remember, Anna, what he said to you?"

"O yes!" replied the child. "He said I must be very obedient and industrious, because I was the eldest, and should set a good example to the others. And also because I had no other way of showing my gratitude to our dear benefactress."

"Ah!" cried the old woman, "what would I not give if I could only once kiss the hand of the angel who has done so much for us.

The pastor says she is very young, and by no means rich; but he could tell us no more, for she had forbidden him to mention her name. O, if you only knew, my dear young lady, how many benefits she has showered upon us! She paid the doctor and the apothecary for me; she had the whole house, which threatened daily to fall upon our heads, put in a complete state of repair; and she has clothed my poor, naked grandchildren from top to toe."

"And did not the pastor say, if I were industrious, she would have me taught to make dresses, that I might in future support my grandmother?" asked Anna.

"No, no, I am to do that!" cried the eldest boy; "for you are only a girl, and I am to be a carpenter; the pastor promised me so; and next Monday I am to begin going to school. What will the other children say when they see my fine, new spelling-book, with a great cock crowing on the first page?"

Marian smiled, and patted the child's blooming cheek.

"O, you are so good!" cried the old woman, seizing the young girl's hand. "You do not

know what pride is, and you are so kind to the poor! When my children and I kneel down every morning and every evening to beg a blessing upon our unknown benefactress, we never forget to include you in our prayers."

Marian turned aside to hide her tears, and said: "I must go now, I shall be wanted at home. Here, Anna, is the stuff I promised you for your first pair of stockings; they were very well knit for a beginner. And this kerchief is for your grandmother, you must hem it all yourself, and I will come and see whether it is carefully done."

Marian skilfully avoided the thanks drawn forth by her gifts, and hastened away, feeling unusually joyous, and free from all the dark presentiments which had so oppressed her during her long walk to the widow's dwelling.

As she reached the front door, Pauline rushed to meet her, crying out: "I saw you coming; I have been waiting for you ever so long. Father knows all!"

"Indeed!" replied Marian, "and what did he say?"

“ Only think,—nothing!—not a syllable! I was prepared for a terrible storm; but he listened as quietly as if he cared nothing about it. When I had finished what I had to say, he rose slowly from his seat and walked up and down the room several times. He seemed to suffer from repeated attacks of vertigo for every now and then he would grasp the various articles of furniture he chanced to be near, and they would shake under his touch. I feared he would faint as he left the room, his steps were so unsteady. When he went out, I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my heart. I soon after saw him pass the window on his way to the sugar-refinery; but I never saw father look so before, he was as pale as a ghost!”

“ Is it long since he went out?” asked Marian, anxiously.

“ O yes, quite long. But you are so pale, cousin!—and I am tormented by an indescribable anxiety. If you had only seen my father as he passed the window; he looked up once: I shall never forget that look in all my life!”

"O, I would he were returned!" sighed Marian. "God grant that all may end well! And where is your betrothed?" asked she, after a moment's pause.

"My betrothed?" replied Pauline, abstractedly; "O, he is gone! I did not see him again. Mother had a conversation with him. But I can think of nothing,—my wits are all astray. O, do come with me out of doors; I shall feel better in the fresh air."

Although Marian felt very tired, she cheerfully consented to accompany her cousin. Madam Werner had fallen asleep upon the sofa, and Marian begged Mrs. Wilnevitz to tell her aunt when she should awake, that she had gone out to walk with Pauline, and would return in an hour at the latest.

But the hour passed, and Pauline could not be persuaded to retrace her steps; it seemed as if she feared to re-enter her parents' house, for she hurried ever onwards without heeding Marian's entreaties.

"It will soon be dark," said the latter; "we are more than a mile from town, and your parents will be very anxious."

"Only as far as the next mile-stone!" begged Pauline. That point reached, she proposed a new goal, but Marian seized her hand, and said firmly: "Not one step farther! If you will not return, I must go alone."

So saying, she left her cousin, who stood a moment irresolute, but finally turned and followed, as if mechanically. Marian took Pauline's arm, and strove to hurry her onward as fast as possible; but when they reached the city gate, the latter sat down and said: "I can go no farther; I am too tired!"

Marian was also dreadfully wearied; her feet almost refused to sustain her; but she besought her cousin to proceed, and lean upon her, that she might feel her fatigue less.

"Come, Pauline!" prayed she, with tears in her eyes; "I long so to be at home! God alone knows what may await us there!"

At these words Pauline rose quickly, and, as if driven by evil spirits, hastened onward so rapidly that Marian had difficulty in keeping by her side. Both stood a moment on the

doorstep to listen. Strange sounds fell upon their ears; they heard people running up and down stairs, doors opened and again shut, cries of sorrow, and words which they could not comprehend.

They looked at each other, shuddered, and entered the house. The door of the sitting-room was wide open; without, stood all the servants, apparently greatly excited and agitated; on a table burned a single light, which flickered in the heavy draught.

The two girls made their way with clasped hands and beating hearts to the middle of the room, and, O Heaven! what a sight then met their inquiring glances! The Councillor, with closed eyes, lay extended on a couch, cold and dead. His wife knelt at his feet, and at that moment slowly arose. When she saw Pauline, she went to meet her, and led her to her father's side. Her bosom rose and fell convulsively, her lips were tightly closed, but the tearless eyes which stared wildly upon her daughter seemed to say: "Look there, unhappy girl! that is your work!"

Suddenly, the overstrained nerves gave way,

and she fell back with a loud laugh into Marian's arms. A violent fit of hysterical weeping followed, which lasted until she sank into an unquiet slumber.

The accounts which Marian gathered from the terrified servants were confused and unsatisfactory. "All that I know," said Mrs. Wilnevitt through her tears, "is, that the master arrived at the sugar-refinery very much exhausted. He went from one boiler to another, looked through all the various stores, and often shook his head, but without speaking a word. He finally went out; the workmen looked after him in astonishment, and were still more surprised when, after a few moments, they saw him suddenly turn and retrace his steps. 'I feel very unwell,' said he to the Inspector, who was standing in the door-way; 'send at once to my house, and order the coachman to harness the horses and take me home.' He sat down upon a barrel, as if to await the arrival of the carriage; the Inspector went to close the opposite door, fearing lest the draught might be injurious, and when he returned, your uncle was dead; the blood had

suddenly rushed to his brain. About an hour ago, they brought him here upon a bed; the doctor was sent for, but he said at once he could do nothing."

Pauline yielded to her sorrow with her usual violence. The thought that she had been the cause of her father's death almost broke her heart; she threw herself upon his body, imploring him with all the energy of delirium once more to awake to life; she would strive to repair the evil she had done; she would never trouble or grieve him again. Then she fell weeping upon her cousin's neck, who strained every nerve to find consolation for the misguided girl. Stifling the expression of her own sorrow, she afforded her aunt all the assistance required by her mournful condition. She acted with a prudence and thoughtfulness far beyond her years. She strove to comfort Pauline's despairing soul. She confessed that the behavior of his daughter might have been one reason of the Councillor's low spirits, but she also assured her that he had, besides, many other causes of sorrow which he had concealed from his family.

"And have you not a mother, Pauline?" added she in a gentle voice; "a mother who now more than ever requires your love and attention?" The father whom you so often grieved is no more; your tears can never wake him. But, believe me, he sees your penitence; he will forgive you if you will repay to your mother the debt of sorrow you have contracted towards him, and if you will bear patiently and steadfastly all that you may still have to suffer."

Pauline went to her mother, whose presence she had hitherto avoided; Madame Werner met her most affectionately, folded her to her bosom with a tenderness of which a mother alone is capable towards an only, suffering child, and uttered no single word of reproach which could remind the stricken girl of her guilt.

The secret worm which had gnawed at the root of the Councillor's life was soon well known to all the town. His death aroused a host of creditors, who poured in with their demands. His books, which had been kept with the greatest order up to the very day of

his death, showed many and repeated losses. He had suffered much through the bankruptcy of others, but a fair income still remained to him. Yet, like the unhappy gambler who places his all upon the last stake, and hopes thereby to win the favor of fortune, he had ventured his whole property in a large speculation, which might have restored to him the double of his loss, but — it had failed.

Judge Dunning, the Councillor's best friend, did all in his power to aid the widow, and she showed, at the melancholy prospects which the upright executor laid before her, a courage and greatness of soul scarcely to have been expected from so weak a woman.

“Do not think of me or of my children!” said she in a firm voice to Dunning. “My husband prized an unspotted name above all else; and his shall live unstained amid his fellow-citizens. Only act so that all may soon be settled! I cannot sleep in peace or breathe freely until the last debt shall have been paid.”

Although the clearness and precision of the Councillor's accounts afforded every needful aid in the settlement of his affairs, yet several

months elapsed before the widow's desire could be fulfilled. The sale of the real estate could not be more speedily effected, without too great a sacrifice. Finally, however, the accounts were closed, and every debt paid; but all had been sacrificed, for the little sum that Dunning had been able to save from the general wreck was nothing in comparison to the large fortune which the family had formerly enjoyed.

Pauline had interfered in none of the arrangements which circumstances had rendered necessary. At her mother's request she had resigned all her ornaments, even the greater part of her clothes; she seemed to have no desires and no will apart from her mother's. Only when Madame Werner held a consultation with Dunning as to the propriety of remaining in K—, did she advance any decided opinion, expressing an aversion to such a proposition, and saying she would prefer the most obscure village to their present residence.

It might have been pride which inspired this expression of feeling, or more probably a

dread of the contempt and neglect of those whom she had so often wounded in the days of her own haughty prosperity. And this fear was certainly not without foundation. There are many persons who are mean enough to think they have a right to repay all the torments which envy has forced upon them on the defenceless heads of the unfortunate, bowed beneath the heavy strokes of an unhappy fate.

Marian supported her cousin's opinion, but expressed herself much more clearly and decidedly upon the subject, saying to her aunt: "I think we had better go to the city in which I was born; I long to revisit the graves of my parents. Besides, there are many more wealthy families there than here; and as our little property will not suffice for our support, I hope to find opportunities for increasing our income. The Judge agreed with Marian, and it was decided they should leave K—— during the course of the ensuing week.

The pastor was one of the few persons to whom Marian paid a parting visit. He showed himself at the last hour as friendly and thoughtful as ever, and promised from

time to time to inform her of the welfare of her *protégés*.

"All must go well with you!" said he, looking upon her face with moistened eyes. When Marian was about to depart, he begged her to wait a few moments longer; then, stepping to his writing-desk, he sealed a letter which he gave her, saying: "It is a letter of introduction to the wife of Count L——, who removed to M—— a few years ago. He formerly lived on his estate, several miles from the city, and during that period I was tutor to his eldest son. The letter will, I hope, be of use to you; the Countess, who is a very lovely woman, will certainly do all in her power to aid you, my dear child, in the execution of your plans."

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW AND OLD FRIENDS.

ALTHOUGH Madame Werner still felt very weak, she made an effort to prepare all for the departure of herself and family on the appointed day. Circumstances seemed to favor the choice of that particular time; for a driver who had brought some strangers to K——, in a very comfortable carriage which was to return to M—— empty, offered to take the Councillor's lady and her daughters to that city for a moderate compensation. Mrs. Wilnevitz accompanied them; in spite of all their representations, the good woman refused to leave the family.

Our travellers reached their journey's end quite comfortably, and remained during the first few days at a little inn, which had been

selected on account of the cheapness of the lodgings.

Madame Werner intended, if possible, to purchase a place in some charitable institution, and, after many vain efforts, succeeded in finding a suitable locality. She expended nearly the whole of her small means in procuring three rooms in the Mary Institute, whose late occupants had recently died. Besides this shelter, she was also to receive a yearly pension of one hundred and fifty dollars. The remainder of the little fund, with the exception of a few dollars, was spent in the necessary furniture and utensils, which were all of the simplest kind. She bore every privation with the most steadfast courage, and only when her eyes fell upon her spoiled child, her darling, would the tears gather and roll silently down over her wan cheeks. Pauline evidently strove to be as composed as possible, but could not always conceal her dejection.

Marian was the soul of the whole; she and Mrs. Wilnevit made all the purchases, and the little rooms soon presented quite a comfortable

and pleasant appearance ; for although the various articles were of the cheapest kinds, yet she had taken pains to select agreeable forms, and all harmonized well together. The white curtains, the fresh flowers blooming in the windows, and the portraits of the Councillor and his wife hanging over the sofa, gave to the whole an air of elegance. Marian was never tired of lauding the pleasantness of their new dwelling, throwing in so many striking remarks upon the manifold discomforts and disadvantages of a larger one, that she even sometimes succeeded in causing a smile upon Pauline's melancholy face.

" Now," said Marian one morning at breakfast,— " now we have finished all our arrangements, and I really can see nothing to find fault with. Neither can you, I hope, Pauline, for your screech-owl of a parrot, which you would on no consideration leave behind you, has been given the best place ; but you can with equal justice reproach me with my affection for my myrtle-tree, of which I have taken excellent care, placing it in the window where the warm sunlight may stream in upon it.

The only sufferer is our purse : the poor thing grows daily weaker and thinner, but it must soon be aided and replenished. I have a thousand plans to effect this end, and will this very day make a trial of the first one. As soon as the visiting hour has struck, I will put on my best black frock and my straw hat, which really looks like new since Mrs. Wilnevit did it up for me, and will take my letter of introduction to Countess L—. I promise myself great things from my first business effort, and I hope my confidence will not be disappointed."

As the clock struck twelve, Marian stood before the Count's house. She had striven hard to conceal from her relatives the fear with which she undertook this application, and she had succeeded; but her heart beat loudly and her voice trembled, as she commissioned a servant in gay livery to announce her to the Countess. She shivered as she crossed the threshold of the richly furnished room into which she was immediately shown, while through another door the Countess entered, and came forward to meet her. After

a few polite speeches by way of preface, which were, however, quite unintelligible to the Countess, Marian gave her the pastor's letter, which she immediately unsealed and read.

Scarcely had she reached the end of the page, when she held out both her hands to the young girl, saying at the same time, in a tone which confirmed the truth of her words: " You are most heartily welcome! One who is so warmly recommended by so upright a man, must everywhere be met with open arms. And what a fortunate meeting! The pastor writes to me that you wish to give music lessons, and I have long been seeking in vain a suitable teacher for my two little girls."

She made Marian sit down beside her on a couch, and looked long and silently upon her lovely countenance.

" Your name is Marian! — Marian Meerfeldt!" said she after a pause. " It is quite strange to me, and yet your appearance is wonderfully familiar."

Marian shook her head; she never remem-

bered to have seen the Countess before. The lady conversed with her long and friendlily, sent for her two daughters, Clara and Eliza, who were respectively twelve and ten years old, and introduced them to Marian as her future pupils.

“ You will do me a great favor,” said the lovely lady at parting, “ if you will begin your lessons to-morrow, and henceforth devote several hours during the day to the instruction of my little girls.”

Marian promised, and departed with a much lighter heart than she had brought with her on her arrival.

“ How do you like your new teacher ? ” asked the Countess of her daughters, as soon as Marian had gone.

“ O very well ! ” cried both together.

“ But can you not tell me, dear mamma, who the lady is like ? ” asked Clara.

The mother said, “ No ! ” “ I cannot tell, ” she added, “ but her face is very familiar to me ! ”

“ O, I know ! I know ! ” cried the youngest, joyfully clapping her hands and dancing round the room.

“ Well ?” asked the Countess expectantly.

“ You know the picture, mother,” said the child with an important air,—“ the picture which brother Eugene sent us a few weeks since to hang over his writing-desk. He wrote that he grieved to part with it, but could not carry it about with him wherever he went.”

“ You are mistaken,” said Clara, doubtingly.

“ No, no !” insisted Eliza, and she rushed out of the room like a storm, returning however in a few moments, bringing a picture, moderately large, and handsomely framed. She held it up in a triumphant manner before her mother’s eyes, saying: “ Do you not think I am right now ? Look, there is the same beautiful brown hair, the same soft blue eyes, the fresh red lips, and the teeth, white and shining as the pearls which, in the picture, she is holding in her hands !”

“ Wonderful !” said the Countess, as if to herself; “ the likeness is unmistakable ; the black dress completes the illusion !”

Eliza was quite happy that the thought had first occurred to her.

“ How I wish,” she cried impatiently, “ that

Eugene would soon return! I am so curious to know whether he will be of our opinion."

" You will have to wait a long time!" said Clara. " Brother will not come until the fall, will he, mother?"

" True, my child, he will not return until the end of the autumn. Carry the picture back to its place, Lizzy, and you must both oblige me by saying nothing of your discovery to any one."

Through the kind mediation of the Countess L——, Marian obtained so many scholars that her hours were all occupied from early in the morning until evening. Her health, however, visibly suffered under the constant labor, for giving music lessons is no easy task. Her patience was often severely tried when the spoiled children of rich parents wilfully tormented her; and not seldom was she forced to dry tears occasioned by the meagre fruit of her earnest striving.

Can there be a greater torment for one who loves music with a real enthusiasm, than to be daily and hourly forced to hear the most beautiful melodies, and the finest works of the

great masters, tortured and disfigured in the most horrible manner? Oh! that was truly hard-earned gold which Marian, at the end of every month, placed in the common treasury; but she always brought it with so smiling a mien, and the pleasure which she felt in being able to alleviate the sufferings of her aunt shone so joyfully through her eyes, that Madame Werner was very far from dreaming that this money was purchased with the very lifeblood of her niece.

Pauline rejoiced in the success of her cousin's efforts, and blushed as she confessed that music was not the thriftless art which she had so often contemptuously called it. She would willingly have shared in Marian's exertions, but her knowledge in everything was too superficial to think of instructing others. Sewing alone remained to her, and in that she was no proficient. Her first attempts were utter failures; but Marian, who felt how painful it must be to her cousin not to be able to render herself useful in any way, bought the first fruits of her labor without letting Pauline suspect who the real purchaser was.

This success gave her courage; her work became gradually better, and after some time she received orders sufficient to keep her constantly occupied. She had but little leisure in which to compare her present with her former condition; she gradually became more contented, and soon felt stronger and healthier than ever.

When not with her own family, Marian nowhere felt so happy as when with that of Count L——, and she usually spent her evenings with the Countess. The two little girls loved their young teacher inexpressibly; they knew her ring at the bell, and ran to meet her, each striving to be the first to open the door, that she might have the first embrace. Both children possessed much talent, and took great pleasure in the cultivation of music; here at least Marian's efforts met with appreciation and reward. She often received great praise for the rapid progress made by her pupils, but, with her usual modesty, she ascribed it to the children's extraordinary ability, whereby the little ones felt still more closely drawn towards her.

One evening, Marian was persuaded to remain after the lessons were over. No strangers were present; even the Count was absent, and his wife and daughters sat with Marian in friendly converse round the tea-table.

The Countess loved music passionately, and had often been charmed by Marian's playing; she admired the young girl's really brilliant and accurate execution far less than the power she possessed of expressing all her feelings through the medium of tones, and of thus impressing them upon the listener. Marian played but seldom, rarely when she was asked to do so in company, unless her refusal would have been ungracious or impolite; and then her playing did not surpass a fair mediocrity. It was like that of a learner who plays for the first time before a large assemblage, a sonata which she has been many weeks in acquiring, and which is finally thrummed through as an irksome task. But Marian would occasionally break off in the midst of a speech, and, flying to the piano, would begin to play in a bold, free style, that conveyed at once a certainty of power and

excellence. She would sometimes take a poem of Schiller's (her favorite poet) as a theme, and render it in a manner which displayed what perfect control she had of the instrument, how well she comprehended the great poet, and how exactly she could translate his thoughts and words into a more ethereal language.

"Shall I play something for you this evening?" asked Marian of the children, who had already begged her several times in vain.

"O yes!" cried both, joyfully springing up.

"O do play *The Bell*," begged Clara, coaxingly; "I never heard you play that."

The Countess also joined in this request.

"*The Bell?*" said Marian sadly; "I do not know!—I fear—it excites me so!"

The Countess was about to withdraw her request, when the young girl hastily opened the fine, grand piano and began. Slowly and significantly resounded the master's solemn discourse. With ever increasing interest did the listeners hearken to the clear strokes which some joyful occurrence had drawn forth from the metallic crown; with that mixture of fear

and joyous security with which our souls are stirred when we hearken to some tragic fiction, did they follow the various sounds announcing the raging of a fearful conflagration. The rattling of the engines, the hissing and crackling of the flames, the crash of falling beams, the howling of the storm, and the heart-breaking cries of men and women and children amid the tumult;—all obeyed the witchery of Marian's skilful fingers, and not until she had led her hearers with slow and mournful passages to another scene, did their excitement yield to a deep melancholy, as they accompanied her through the pangs of an irreparable loss to the last resting-place of poor humanity. While her left hand called forth the heavy tolling, the death-knell of the departed pilgrim, her right expressed, in the most feeling manner, the deep grief and endless sorrow of those whom the death-angel had bereft of a dear friend and relative. Never did a poet's words portray in more lively colors the desolation of the lonely bereaved, none ever breathed forth deeper anguish, than did those strange, wild tones, heaped painfully

together, and finally subsiding into the most touching melodies.

But here Marian suddenly broke off, and rose slowly, as if completely exhausted, from her seat. The Countess hastened towards her, and folded her in her arms.

"Poor child!" said she. "They told me your father died long ago."

"Ah yes! and my mother too!" cried Marian, bursting into tears, "and I loved them so dearly!"

At that moment the door was suddenly thrown open, and a young man rushed into the room.

"Mother! Sisters!" cried he, breathless, as he threw himself into his mother's arms.

"Eugene!" shouted the children, springing upon his neck, "are you really come at last? How we have longed for you!" — and they nearly suffocated their brother with kisses. He gently released himself from their clinging arms, and glanced searchingly round the room until his eyes fell upon Marian, who at his entrance had retired into a corner.

"I could not be mistaken," said he, ap-

proaching the blushing girl. "I stood a moment in doubt before the door," he continued, "not knowing whether I could venture to come in upon my dear ones so unexpectedly, when I heard a faint exclamation which awakened the sweetest memories in my heart. How could I ever mistake that voice for another! Do you remember ever having seen me before?"

Marian stammered out a faint "Yes!"

"O how happy that makes me!" cried the young man, joyfully. He would have said more, but the Countess skilfully joined in the conversation, desiring to know when and where her son had previously met with Marian.

He related how he had made a considerable *detour* on his journey to visit his former teacher in K——, and that he had accidentally seen her there. He would have added more, but a beseeching glance from the young girl sealed his lips. He made a sign to his mother that she should hear all at some other time.

Soon after, the Count returned, and met his

son with a most fervent welcome home, saying : “ My joy at seeing you is doubled by the manner in which you have attended to my affairs, the successful conduct of which I have learned from your letters. Your father now knows you to be a skilful and trustworthy man. You have rendered him weighty services, and you will not find him unthankful. For the present, you must enjoy yourself as much as you can in the circle of your own family ! ”

Marian did not return home until late ; she found her aunt and Pauline asleep, but Mrs. Wilnevitt was still sitting up for her.

“ You must have walked very fast,” said the old woman, as she assisted Marian to undress ; “ your face burns, and your hands are cold as ice. Are you unwell ? ” asked she anxiously, as she still received no answer.

“ No, no,” replied Marian, “ only tired. How soundly I shall sleep to-night ! ”

So saying, she sprang into bed ; but she had deceived herself ; in vain did she toss from side to side,—the angel of sleep seemed to fly her pillow. Eugene’s image was continually before her eyes.

“Our pastor, Paulin, was formerly his teacher!” said she to herself; “he did not shun a long journey to see the old man once more; he accompanied him to the huts of the poor,—that was noble in him, and shows a good heart. Can he really have been the purchaser of my pearls? O, if I only knew! But I will think no more about it,” added she, half aloud, at the same moment rising to arrange her pillow more comfortably;—“so now I must go to sleep!”

These last words were often repeated, until at length the hour struck at which she was accustomed to rise, and not one moment had she slept. She nevertheless arose and hastened to her customary daily tasks, but even such serious occupations failed to quiet her excitement.

CHAPTER IX.

A SURPRISE.

A CONSIDERABLE time passed, during which Marian often felt so happy that she could have embraced the whole world in her joy; but there were again hours when a deep melancholy overcame her, and she felt sad without knowing to what to attribute these sudden changes of mood. Only too soon did all become clear to her. She was one day at the Count's playing a four-handed piece with Clara, when Eugene entered and begged her to accompany his sister to his room.

"The young merchants are having a masquerade," said he; "it can only be seen from my windows, and mother and Eliza are already there."

Clara sprang up; Marian and Eugene fol-

lowed more slowly, and as the one window was occupied by the Countess and her daughters, the young man led Marian to the other, which was separated from the first by the projection of the thick walls. In the recess stood a writing-table; as he moved it away to give more space, Marian's eyes fell upon a portrait in a broad gilt frame hanging over it,—it was her own image. Astonished and deeply moved, she looked inquiringly at the young man.

"O," said he, confused, "it is but a hasty work; I painted it on my journey at the first spot where I had a few moments' leisure. I had seen you but once, but your gentle features were so vividly impressed upon my memory that I could not withstand the temptation of thus retaining them for ever. Will you be displeased with me because my unskilful hand has so poorly aided my good-will?"

Marian turned to the window. It seemed almost as if she had not understood his words, for she immediately began pointing towards the slowly passing procession, and said: "That is Frederic I.; I know him by the studied ele-

gance of his dress, and the monstrous peruke under which he strives to conceal the disproportion of his features. But who is that opposite to him?"

Eugene answered her question, adding many explanations of his own, when suddenly he laid his hand upon the young girl's shoulder and said softly : " Marian! one word, only one word! Tell me, do you like me a little?"

Marian turned towards him, and silently raised his hand to her lips. Then, hearing the Countess say : " Come, children, it seems to be all over!" she quickly dried her eyes, but failed to hide her deep emotion. Eugene's mother must have perceived her agitation, but she said nothing.

A few days after, one Sunday morning, Marian sat at the bedside of her aunt, who had recently been quite unwell; she read aloud to Madame Werner, while Pauline was busy in the next room, and Mrs Wilnevitz was preparing dinner. But her thoughts were evidently far from the words she was uttering; her voice trembled; and she finally laid the

book aside, saying gently: "Forgive me, aunt, but I cannot read to-day, — at least not now."

"Marian," said the widow earnestly, at the same moment taking her hand, "you are not now as you formerly were! The unvarying cheerfulness of your disposition, over which I have so often rejoiced, has vanished. You have a secret that you strive to hide from me. I have long observed it, but I would not ask, because confidence should never be demanded or exacted; only when it is voluntarily bestowed upon us as a free gift of love has it any real value!"

"Dear aunt!" cried Marian, as she fell weeping on the widow's neck, "believe me, neither want of love nor of confidence prevented me from laying bare before you a heart into whose depths I myself have not yet ventured to descend. But I can no longer conceal from myself the greatness of my misfortune; I can no longer deceive myself with regard to my feelings; the dream is at an end! I determined yesterday to tell you all to-day."

The young girl rose, and after a few moments of silence said: "I love him! — Eu-

gene,— the son of Count L——,” added she, correcting herself. “I love him deeply and truly!” She paused as if gasping for air, and then continued beseechingly:—

“ O dear aunt, do not look at me so earnestly, do not shake your head so mournfully! I know well all you would say to me. During the few last endless nights I have said it all to myself a thousand times. He is rich, and I am poor; he is a noble, and I from the people; he is so wise, so worthy of all love,— and I?— It is true, his parents have always been most kind to me,” continued she, as if speaking to herself; “ they ever treated me as an equal; they never cast upon me the haughty smiles, or displayed towards me the courteous condescension, the rest of their class think proper to bestow upon a poor music-mistress. They gave me daily proofs of their good-will, and never assumed those airs of generous patronage which sometimes wound so deeply. But does that give me a right to be ungrateful? What a reward for their benefits if I and their only son— But no, no, they shall never be deceived in me; I will

give up my lessons in their house, and will never more cross their threshold. O counsel me, aunt! help me — ”

“ An invitation for you, Marian, to take tea and sup at Count L——’s,” said Pauline, entering the room.

Marian looked towards her aunt, and then said: “ I pray you tell the servant I must beg to be excused, as my aunt is unwell, and I will not leave her.”

“ Mother is much better to-day,” replied Pauline; “ and the servant delivered so pressing an invitation! You can go without any anxiety, for I will not leave the house.”

“ Well, then, so be it!” answered Marian, after a moment’s thought; “ say, then, I will come. On this very day must all be ended; to-morrow, perhaps, I might not have strength sufficient to carry out my resolution.”

As Pauline left the room, Marian threw herself on her knees by her aunt’s bed, buried her head in the pillows, and wept bitterly.

“ Poor child!” said the widow, “ I suffer with you. These first dreams of the heart are so sweet! Your awakening is bitter, and the

wound must bleed a long time. But do not lose your courage! Beg God for strength, and then strive to bear the inevitable patiently. In suffering alone can the true faith of the Christian be perfected."

Marian with difficulty regained sufficient composure to enable her at a late hour to proceed to that house whose occupants had become so dear to her, and from whom she had determined to part for ever, on this very day. The two little girls, dressed in their best attire, met her on the steps and embraced her joyfully.

"How charming that you have come!" cried Eliza; "I would not move from the window until I saw you approaching."

"And I stood at the other window, so as not to miss you if you should come up Wall Street," said Clara. "The time seemed endless, until Eliza finally cried, 'Here she comes! here she comes!'"

"And must I part from you?" said Marian, involuntarily.

"Part!" repeated both children at once; "who talks of parting? Come now with us,

quick, to our room," continued Clara; "mamma told us to watch for you; she wishes to speak to you before you go into the saloon."

Marian followed the children.

"Are there many strangers there?" asked she, anxiously. "The servant said there would be only a few ladies, and I am not dressed for company."

"O never mind!" cried Eliza. "You look lovely! You will be the centre of attraction! O if I could only tell you!—but they have forbidden me," added she, with a mysterious air.

"Be quiet, you little chatterbox!" said her sister. "Is that the way you keep your promise? If mother only knew! I hear her step, and we must go, Lizzy!"

So saying, she drew her sister away, notwithstanding the little one's impatience.

"You made us wait so long for you, dear Marian!" said the Countess, who had just entered, in a tone of friendly reproach; "I feared you had forgotten us, but now I am doubly glad since you have come at last. But I hope you will not ascribe my joy to

a selfish motive, when I tell you I have a favor to ask of you?"

"Certainly not!" replied Marian.

"Well, then," continued the Countess, "I will express my wishes without any further delay, for time presses. To-morrow is the birthday of one of my husband's young relatives, and wishing to prepare a surprise for her, I have ordered a complete ball costume which only arrived to-day at noon. You, dear Marian, have precisely her figure, and you will perhaps do me the favor to try on the dress, that I may have it altered in case I find any fault in it."

"With pleasure!" answered Marian, following the lady into her dressing-room. She trembled like an aspen-leaf, for she remembered the explanation she had to make to the Countess, and knew she could not easily find a more favorable moment. But if she should be asked the cause of her sudden determination, what could she say? The speech she had so carefully conned had entirely vanished from her memory. The Countess did not leave her much time for consideration, but

led her at once to a sofa, on which lay a charming dress of white silk.

"Come," said the lady, smiling, "I will be your dressing-maid; only you must not be vexed with me if I am not very skilful. O how lovely!—the dress fits exactly! How delighted my young friend will be! But wait a minute,—I must see you in the whole costume;—put on these satin shoes."

While Marian drew them on, the Countess opened a box which stood upon her toilet-table, and then said, "Are you ready?"

"Yes!" replied the young girl softly.

Suddenly a handkerchief was thrown over her face, and her eyes were bandaged.

"You look so melancholy to-day," said the Countess, "and now I am determined you shall smile; you must enjoy your own appearance. All is ready now,—and I will not take the bandage off until you stand before the large mirror."

She had meanwhile fastened a wreath of white roses in Marian's brown hair, and thrown a rich blonde scarf round her shoulders.

"Now give me your hand!" said she joyously, "I will lead you."

"Whither?" asked the young girl anxiously.

"To the blue room, near the saloon; but do not distress yourself; no one is there, I only take you because of the size of the mirror."

They ascended the staircase, several doors were opened and again shut, and finally the bandage was loosened from Marian's eyes. She stood before a tall glass lighted up by three wax candles, burning in a candelabrum placed at its foot. The sudden blaze of light dazzled her so that she was at first obliged to cover her eyes with her hand. In a moment, however, she withdrew it, and silently gazed upon her own image, while a bitter smile played upon her lips.

"O stand so, just a minute longer!" said the Countess. "I will return directly; I have forgotten something."

"But if any one should come?" stammered Marian.

"No one will come, I give you my word. The guests are in the adjoining saloon; you can hear yourself how quiet everything is;

they are chiefly old ladies and gentlemen whom nothing could induce to stir from their card-tables."

The Countess went out, but soon returned; not however alone, but accompanied by her son. As Marian beheld the latter, her eyes fell, and a deep blush crimsoned her cheeks.

"Look, Eugene!" said the Countess to her son, whose face expressed the most enraptured delight, "is she not beautiful? — and dressed as a bride? Here, dear Marian, put on these gloves. So — now give my son your hand, and place yourselves as if you were about to dance a quadrille."

Marian obeyed, and smiled involuntarily, as the Countess led them into the middle of the room, and stationed them opposite the folding doors.

Suddenly, as if by magic, the doors flew open; — a sea of light flooded the astonished couple, festive music resounded, and without rightly knowing how it all happened, they felt themselves pressed forward and stationed in the midst of a brilliant assemblage, whose expectant eyes were all fixed upon them. All

at once, the music ceased; the Count stepped up to them, and, taking his son by one hand and the trembling Marian by the other, cried aloud, in a voice distinctly heard throughout the whole saloon: "We celebrate to-day the betrothal of my son with Miss Marian Meerfeldt!"

The music again struck up with a thundering crash, mingled with many exclamations of astonishment.

Marian thought she must be dreaming; she gazed anxiously round; she could not believe so great a happiness possible. She finally turned to the Countess, who was standing near with moistened eyes enjoying the surprise of the youthful pair, and would have thrown herself at the noble lady's feet, had not the latter caught her in her arms, and pressed her to her heart.

"Here is your place, my daughter," said she tenderly; "you have again a mother, who desires' nothing better than to be able to replace the one you have lost!"

Eugene then approached with his father.

"He is quite satisfied with this proof of my

gratitude!" said the Count, smiling, to his wife.

"O my parents!" cried the young man, "you have made me the happiest of men! Dear father, how richly you have rewarded my efforts! And you, my beloved mother, I recognize your work; your true mother's eye read the heart of your son."

But now, relations and acquaintances pressed forward with their congratulations, and Clara and Eliza joyfully greeted Marian as their sister.

"I knew it all," whispered the little one to Marian, "but I did not dare to tell!"

"O what happiness it will be!" cried Clara, "to have you always living with us!"

But Marian grew paler and paler; her frail body succumbed to the feelings which overflowed in her soul.

"I am dying!" whispered she, as she fell fainting into the arms of her betrothed, who bore her into the adjoining room. His efforts soon aroused her; she opened her beautiful eyes, and looked up silently into the young man's face.

"O is it indeed all true?" asked she at length, folding her hands.

"Yes, yes, it is all true!" cried Eugene in a tone of delight. "You are my bride, my own beloved bride!"

"And you, Eugene, my betrothed!"

"What happiness lies in those blessed words!"

"How could I ever have dared to hope it!"

"My Marian!"

"My Eugene!"

"Nothing shall henceforth divide us!"

"And your parents, who called me their daughter!"

"And Clara and Lizzy, who only see in you an elder sister!"

"But my aunt's blessing is still wanting," suddenly cried Marian; "O let us hasten to her; how she will rejoice in my happiness!"

Eugene was soon ready; he ordered the horses to be harnessed, and begged his two sisters to accompany them. The carriage soon stopped before the old Mary Institute; Mrs. Wilnevit came to admit the visitors, and was no little astonished at their appear-

ance. The Councillor's widow sat in a large arm-chair, while Pauline read aloud to her by the light of a little lamp.

"Aunt! aunt!" cried Marian, throwing herself on her aunt's bosom; but she could say no more; her emotion had deprived her of the power of speech. Eugene and his sisters related all. Madame Werner pressed her dear adopted child to her heart; the old house-keeper found a more noisy way of expressing her joy, while Pauline held out her hand to the young betrothed, and said, with a trembling voice, "You have deserved your happiness!"

C H A P T E R X.

CONCLUSION.

A FEW weeks later, Mrs. Wilnevit wove a bridal wreath for Marian from the myrtle-tree which she had given her on the day of her confirmation. The good pastor came from K—— to perform the marriage ceremony for his two former pupils. The wedding day was bright and beautiful. Marian had begged that the solemnities should take place in the smallest possible family circle, that her memories might be the more peaceful and undisturbed.

Another great joy was also prepared for her during the evening. Eugene placed a simple casket with a key, in her hand.

“Open it yourself!” said he gently. Marian did so, and her pearls lay within. Dumb with delight, she pressed them to her lips.

"I have you then once more!" cried she after a pause. "O, you have indeed brought me more happiness than the most tender mother could have dreamed of for her only child!"

"That is the mother's blessing!" said the Countess, deeply moved.

"These pearls," cried Eugene, "shall always remain in the family. They first permitted me to look within the sanctuary of your soul, my beloved Marian, and to them am I indebted for all my happiness!"

"All that I have told you, dear Olga, was no invention!" said Gertrude, when she had reached this portion of her story. "Marian is still living a few miles from the gates of M——, on the lovely estate known as Lucienhof, where the Count himself formerly resided, but which is now the property of his only son. Eugene has become an efficient agriculturist, and loves his wife, who has already presented

him with several lovely children, as much as in the first hour of their union; and his parents have never repented having paid more regard to nobility of soul in their choice of a daughter-in-law, than to a long genealogy. Clara is already betrothed; but Eliza will not think of leaving her parents; she says that whoever she marries must surely live with her father and mother.

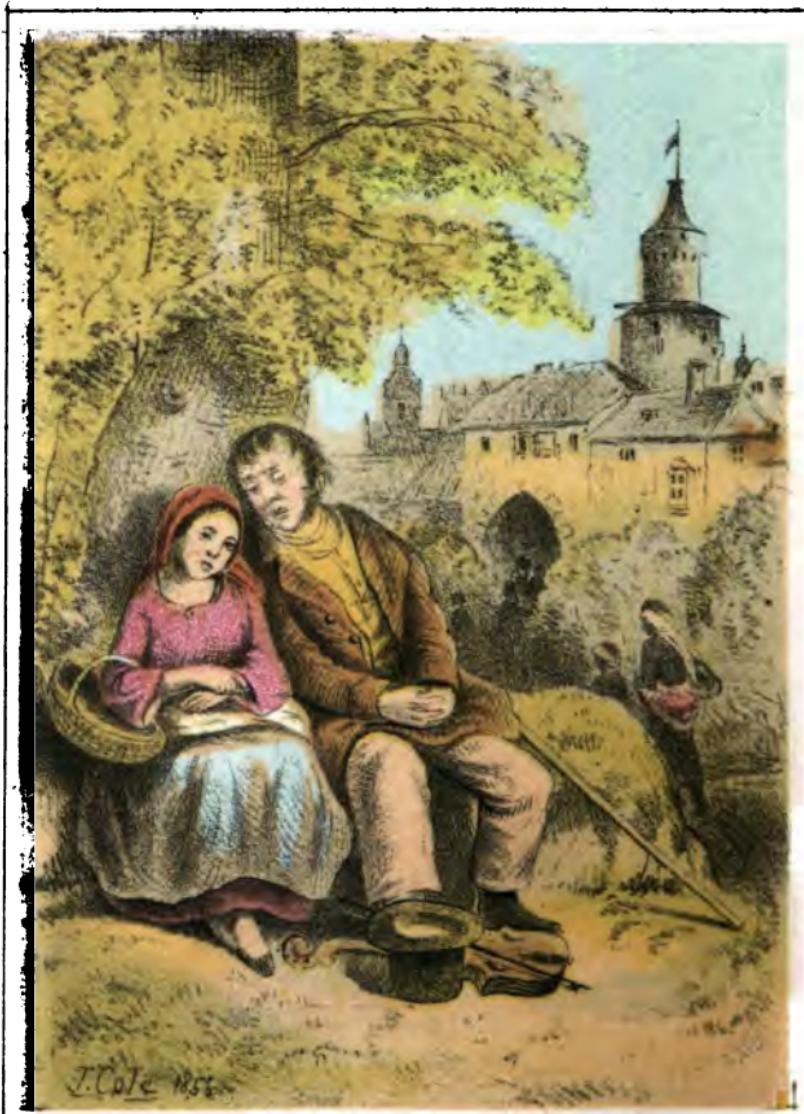
The Councillor's widow dwells with her dear adopted daughter, who is ever most attentive to her comfort and her pleasure. Pauline is still unmarried, and occupies, with Mrs. Wilnevitz, the three little rooms in the Mary Institute; but she has finally concluded to yield to Marian's earnest entreaties, and remove to a pleasant apartment at Lucienhof, prepared for her long ago. The place in the Institute is to be given entirely to Mrs. Wilnevitz.

Those who formerly knew Pauline would scarcely recognize her, were they to meet her now, so great a change has taken place in her whole nature. She is now as friendly and obliging towards every one as she was for-

merly cold and repellent ; she looks upon Marian's happiness without a single envious feeling, and cheerfully employs in useful occupations those hours whose tedious length formerly cost her so many a yawn. Marian's children love her dearly, and the little ones succeed even better than their elders in dissipating the melancholy which the remembrance of past days sometimes casts upon her spirit.

Misfortune has cured her faults, and cultivated her virtues ; but woe to those who must pass through such bitter experiences before they find the right way.

THE BLIND GRANDFATHER.



Purver's & Wetzer's Lith. Boston.

THE POOR BLIND FIDDLER.

C H A P T E R I.

HOME.

ON a sloping hill-side, near the little stream which runs through the village of B——, stood a low, thatched cottage. In the door-way sat an aged woman, spinning, whose snow-white cap and patched gray gown betrayed a union of neatness and extreme poverty not often encountered. Her grandchild, Madeleine, a girl of about ten years old, occupied a low stool at her feet, and was busily engaged in knitting.

The warm sunlight fell upon the little group, lighting up the gold threads waving amid the girl's brown hair, and playing with the faint smile resting on her sweet lips, until both she and the aged woman looked as if they had stepped out of some old picture.

From within the little room proceeded a

soft, low, wailing sound, as of a spirit mourning its temporary imprisonment in the material bonds of an earthly body. Higher and louder grew the strain, more and more passionate the cry for release.

"Grandfather seems sad to-day!" said the child, raising her brown eyes to her grandmother's face.

"Yes, Lina, he needs soothing to-day, and only to his violin will he confide all the sorrowful thoughts that grieve his soul. Never, through all the poverty and misery we have shared together, have I known him to make a single complaint. He fears lest he should lay an additional burden on my heart; but in truth, a natural expression of impatience at all the miseries he has endured would be far less heart-rending than his ever patient smile, and those strange, unearthly melodies which wring the soul until tears stream from all eyes, except the sightless orbs of the musician."

"Poor grandfather! How did he become blind?" asked the child.

"Alas! want and sorrow, with working late in the night, brought on him illness, and

finally blindness. I remember well the first day on which he became convinced that his sight must soon be totally and for ever dimmed. He drew me to the window where the sunlight was streaming in, and said: 'Let me take one last look before the night comes, that I may thus think of thee, my Elsie, during the long hours of darkness.' He laid his hand upon my hair,—it was as brown then, Lina, as yours is now,—and stroked it, saying: 'I shall never see it gray through the sorrows I have brought upon thee; thine eyes can never dim to me; but the blind man will ever see thee as thou now art.' My tears fell fast, and he continued: 'Nay, see, Elsie, I have already dimmed their lustre. What wilt thou do, poor child, when thy husband is quite blind?' I felt a strong confidence in God's aid and in my own energy, and answered as I pressed my lips to his dear eyes: 'God will care for us, and will never suffer evil to overwhelm us. But what wilt thou do, dear Ernest, when all the beauty of nature, of sky and land, which thou so lovest, shall be cut off from thee, and even thy beloved notes

must lie useless on thy desk?' 'All is here, and here, and here,' said he, laying his hand first upon his noble brow, then upon his heart, and finally drawing me to his bosom in a close embrace. 'I shall not repine while I have thee, Elsie, and some day we shall together hear the eternal harmonies.' A heavenly smile passed over his face, as if he were already listening to them in the depths of his own soul."

"But how came we to be so poor?" asked the child, as the aged woman paused, overcome by the memories of the past.

"You know, my child, that your grandfather's parents were people of high rank, and while he was a student at the University, when he and I were both very young, he married me in opposition to the wishes of all his family, who never saw him again. I was a poor girl, with an ordinary education, but with a heart overflowing with love to him, and willing and anxious to learn all that was needful to render me a suitable companion for him. He had no profession, and having a great love for music, with considerable musical knowledge,

he determined to devote himself to teaching. He soon found abundance of occupation, but being dissatisfied with the amount of his acquirements, he applied himself most diligently to the science and practice of his chosen art. He taught all day, and studied during a great part of the night. His constitution was originally excellent, and he endured this mode of life, apparently without injury, during the first year of our marriage; but soon after your mother's birth, his health failed, a long illness followed, terminating in blindness, during which all our little savings were expended, and when he recovered his strength, it was impossible for him to pursue his former avocation."

"How did you manage to live, dear grandmother?"

"I sewed, knit, and spun, thus earning enough to keep us from starvation. After a time, your mother grew old enough to assist me, and finally she married. Your father was as poor as ourselves, but he was a good son, and spared no pains to render his wife's parents as comfortable as he possibly could.

A fever contracted from exposure to the hot sun terminated his life, and your poor mother died in giving you birth. Since then, we have been forced to struggle hard to procure the common necessities of life, but have ever been contented and united, love supplying the place of this world's gauds, and you, my child, being the cherub sent from Heaven to cheer your poor grandfather, and lighten all my cares."

"Has grandfather never heard from his family since he left the University?"

"He never saw any of them after his marriage, and now I believe they are all dead except one sister, who was too young when he left home to retain any remembrance of him. She is married now, and lives near S——."

"What relation is she to me, grandmother?"

"Your great aunt, Lina. I have heard that her health is delicate, and as she has lost her only child, you will probably soon be the last living scion of a once numerous and flourishing house. At least, your grandfather has bestowed such pains upon your education that you will be an honor to any family!"

"How can I ever repay you both for all you have done for me?" said the child, kissing her grandmother's thin hand, and looking up reverently into her face. "But hark!" she continued, "grandfather has laid his violin aside, and I must go to him."

She left the door-way, but soon returned, leading an old man, apparently more bowed down through sorrow and suffering than through age.

"Sit here, grandfather," said Lina, spreading a soft rug upon the door-step.

"Yes, that is well, at my Elsie's feet," murmured the old man as he felt his wife's hand laid softly upon his head. "Come here, my good Lina, sit you beside me, and then I shall dream we are in heaven, and you are two of God's angels; and so in truth you are. How mildly the sunbeams fall upon my brow,—like rays from the eternal Light!"

"Yes, grandfather, the sun is just setting. Do you hear the birds, how they are singing a farewell song before they go to rest?"

"Yes, dear child, they fear no morrow."

"And dost thou, my Ernest?" asked the wife.

"Not for myself, but for thee and the child.
My soul is very sad this evening!"

"I heard it, Ernest, in thy tones."

"Grandfather," said the child, "if I bring you the violin, will you not try and play me a bird song? The sky is all purple, and gold, and crimson, and you should teach the poor, sad violin to sing like the birds."

"Not now, my child, perhaps to-morrow,—you must be my bird to-night, and sing to me as I rest here at my Elsie's knee."

Lina obeyed, and sang in a sweet, clear, and evidently cultured voice, a simple evening hymn. As the last notes died upon the breeze, she turned towards her grandparents, and beheld tears of tenderness and devotion falling fast from her grandmother's eyes over the honored head of the stricken old man, who lay sleeping at her feet.

"Softly, Lina, do not wake him! Let him rest! Only bring his cloak and lay over him, that he may take no cold!"

C H A P T E R II.

A DEATH-BED.

Toil and anxiety could not for ever battle in vain with that stout heart but frail form, and, a few weeks later, the devoted wife lay upon her death-bed.

All was silent in the room. Exhausted by grief and watching, the child slept on a small couch near her grandmother's bed, by the side of which sat the blind man, anxiously listening to the invalid's irregular breathing, announcing a troubled slumber. Her hand lay in her husband's. As she woke, she gently pressed it, and said in a faint voice: "I must soon leave you Ernest; will you promise to answer me truly one question before I go?"

"Yes, Elsie; from me you have always had the truth, and always shall have it. What

question can you ask me which I would hesitate to answer you,—you, the good angel of my dreary pathway?"

"Ah! that is just it!" sighed the wife; "had it not been for me, your pathway might have been as bright as that of the most favored children of fortune. Tell me truly, have you never repented our marriage?"

"Never, Elsie; I have sometimes grieved over the entire and harsh separation from all my family, but never have I for a moment regretted my union with you, the sweetest, most loving, and strong-hearted of women. I feel I must lose you now, but I shall not be long alone. I will soon follow you where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

"But Ernest, the child, the dear child,—who is to care for her in this dreary world?"

"I have provided for that. I will take her to my sister, the Countess von Arnheim, who lives at S—, and who cannot refuse to befriend the innocent and lovely girl, who will in the end probably receive the inheritance of which her grandfather has been deprived."

"But, dear Ernest, how can you find means to take so long a journey. We have nothing to sell. Your violin is the only object of value we possess, and you surely will not part with that?"

"No, dear Elsie, the violin is the very thing I rely on to enable me to reach S—— with the child."

"But how, Ernest, can the violin aid you?"

"Lina is young, and I, though aged, can still command strength sufficient to make the journey on foot."

"But how will you procure food? and neither you nor she can endure the cold night-air."

"My violin will supply all our wants. Think you," said he, smiling sadly, "that while so many vagrants can earn their bread by counterfeiting music in the streets, your husband cannot win tones from his instrument which shall move the by-standers to bestow a little food on the poor blind fiddler's grandchild?"

"Why, Ernest, you will not beg for her?" cried the old woman, half rising in the excitement of her feelings.

"And why not, dear wife?" said the blind

man soothingly, "why not? Is it too much to ask of our fellow human beings that they should aid me in placing my little one in safety? For her sake, we must stifle pride; and I must strive to repay to her a portion of the toil and care you have bestowed upon me."

"You, my husband, my noble husband! stand by the way-side, and through your divine music ask alms of the indifferent wayfarers? — you — my Ernest? Great God!"

"Nay, Elsie, do not look upon it thus; are not all men our brethren, my beloved? and is she not their child as well as ours? Why should we feel shame at that which the hand of God has laid upon us,—our poverty? Think of it more calmly, dearest, and rejoice with me that our dove will find so safe an ark, and that I shall so soon be free to follow you!"

"My noble husband! You can make even beggary sublime! But I hope there may be many peaceful days yet in store for you, even in this world. Who knows —"

"Hush, Elsie! Do not speak of that; what can remain for me in the world after you

have left it? But rest you now,—you seem much exhausted."

"Yes, dearest. Lay my head upon your shoulder—so—good-night."

A long stupor followed. The aged woman's breath grew fainter and fainter, and finally her pulse ceased to beat,—an icy cold chilled the old man to the heart, and he knew that all was over.

Alas for the true and tender heart left alone to suffer in this world, bereaved of its dearest!

C H A P T E R III.

THE RECOGNITION.

ONE bright day in the early part of the month of September, an unusual commotion on the quiet roads leading to S— announced the commencement of the annual fair. The attention of many passers was attracted by the venerable appearance of an aged man leaning asleep against one of the noble trees bordering the way-side, with a violin at his feet and a fair child at his side.

The old man looked wan and weary, and the child watched him anxiously. Several persons had stopped to gaze upon the wanderers, when the old man awoke, and, hearing the little gathering, said half aloud to himself: “One more effort, and the child can rest com-

fortably to-night. To-morrow I will take her to my sister."

He stooped and lifted the instrument. Half forgetful of his listeners, he played some simple airs, but with such deep pathos that all hearts were moved, and one person, more energetic or more compassionate than the rest, was about to institute a collection, when a carriage wound slowly down the hill, and, as if attracted by the music, stopped nearly opposite the little group. A lady looked out from the window; and as she listened, her eyes filled with tears.

"How strange!" said she to her husband; "look, Arnheim, look at that poor, old blind fiddler,—did you ever see a more touching group? And listen, I never heard such music before. The old man's very soul seems to be pleading for some earthly or perhaps heavenly gift. The strain is so ethereal, it seems far above earth wants, and yet the blind man's appearance betokens the deepest poverty."

"Surely, Anna," replied Count von Arnheim, "this can be no common street musician; that man has known better days, and must have endured much suffering."

“And the child!” said the Countess; “she is just the age our Madeleine would have been had she lived, and as I look I see a strong resemblance to our lost darling,—the brown hair and eyes, the tender dove-like expression! Do you not see the likeness?”

“The girl certainly looks much as you did when I first saw you as a child in your father’s house, with the exception of the costume.”

“I must see her nearer. Shall we send for them to come to the carriage?”

“Nay, we are late already,” replied the Count, taking out his watch. “Had you not better wait until to-morrow, and send word to them by the footman, to call at our mansion in the morning?”

“It may be too far for them to come, or they may go away to-night,” said the Countess.

“Sit still, then, and I will go myself and engage them to come and play for us. The old musician would certainly prefer a private concert to a public one of this sort!”

So saying, the Count left the carriage, and, approaching the group, said to the old man,

whose venerable appearance inspired an involuntary respect: "We owe you thanks for your beautiful music, and my wife, the Countess von Arnheim, has been so much struck with the appearance of your little girl, that she has desired me to come and ask you to call at our mansion near S—, early to-morrow morning."

The blind man started, a strange smile flitted over his pallid countenance, but, recovering himself immediately, he said: "Tell the Countess von Arnheim we will not fail to come."

The Count was about placing a gold piece in the child's hand, when the old man, who had heard the clink of the metal, and divined the cause, took it from the child, and saying, "Not now," returned it to the Count, with so dignified a gesture that he could not but receive it.

On the following morning the Countess received a card on which was written, "The old blind fiddler and his grandchild." She hastened down to meet them, and bade them follow her

into her boudoir, where sat the Count at a late breakfast.

The little girl's resemblance to her own lost child again struck the Countess most forcibly, and, taking off Lina's hood, she drew her to a window that she might gaze more closely upon her features.

"Most strange!" sighed she.

"At that moment the old man took his violin from its case, and began to play a cradle song which his mother had been in the habit of singing to her children every evening.

As the Countess listened to the exact imitation of her mother's manner, she burst into tears, and, leading the child by the hand to its grandfather, said in deep emotion: "Who are you? Where did you learn that? What does it all mean?"

"It means, Countess von Arnheim," replied the blind man, "that you see before you, for the first and last time since you were a little toddling infant, your brother Ernest, of whom you may remember to have heard, and who was discarded by his family because he re-

fused to sacrifice his happiness to their ambition, and chose to wed worth, intelligence, and beauty, instead of rank and wealth. The grandchild of that injured angel, and your own great-niece, stands before you. My Elsie and the child's parents have left this weary world, which I shall not long cumber, and I am come to ask you, Anna, to be a mother to this poor orphan."

"My brother! my dear brother!" cried the Countess, falling upon the blind man's neck; "why did you not come to me before, and why are you now in such misery? O, you little know how often I have thought of you, and how I have made every possible inquiry concerning you and yours!"

Tears trickled down the old man's cheeks as he felt the warm drops of sisterly affection falling upon his face.

"Elsie!" he cried, "why are you not here?" Then mournfully shaking his head, he continued: "Too late, it is too late! But the child, Anna, the child?"

The Countess pressed a kiss upon the child's forehead, and, turning to her husband,

said: "The child shall be as our own; shall it not, Arnheim?" .

"Your will is mine, Anna!" was the reply. But the words fell somewhat coldly on the blind man's heart, and he said:—

"It is a man's prerogative, I believe, to be suspicious, and I cannot blame you, Count; but you shall soon be satisfied with regard to the truth of my statements: I bear the proofs with me."

After hearing the blind man's story, which he told in a few broken words, and carefully examining the proofs of his identity, the Count was perfectly satisfied, and, opening his arms to the child, said:—

"Come hither, Lina! You never saw your own father, and now you must think I am he. I once had a little girl who loved me very dearly, but now she is gone, and you will stay with me and mamma, Anna, will you not?"

"And grandfather?" asked the child anxiously.

"Dear Lina!" said the old man, "I leave you here with those who will love you and be very kind to you; but I must go out again

into the wide world — for a short, a very short time."

"O no, brother!" cried the Countess, "you must live with us. What? go out into the world, blind, aged, and alone? Can you leave the child? Will it not break your heart to part from her?"

"The sooner the better," murmured the old man.

"O say not so, brother! It is true I have no claim upon your affection, but the fault is not mine; and will you not let me do for you now what I would have done for you and Elsie long ago, had you not been so mistrustful of my heart?"

"O, you would indeed have loved Elsie, had you known her; — but I must go, — I cannot stay, — her grave is far from here —"

"Grandfather, dear grandfather!" cried the child, throwing herself at his feet, and covering his hand with kisses, "do not leave me! do not leave me!"

The old man's head fell upon his breast, and he murmured: "No, Elsie, I will never leave thee. I come, — I come!"

He started to his feet, his countenance beamed with an unearthly light, his blind eyes seemed to gaze upon the glories of Heaven ; he stretched forth his arms, as if to grasp some form seen only by him, and then fell back fainting and unconscious into his chair.

His sister showered upon him all the cares which the fondest affection could devise, but all were in vain. A few days later, his spirit left its earthly tenement to rejoin the lost Elsie. His task was done,—his faults expiated ; and through much suffering had he won the hope of eternal rest.

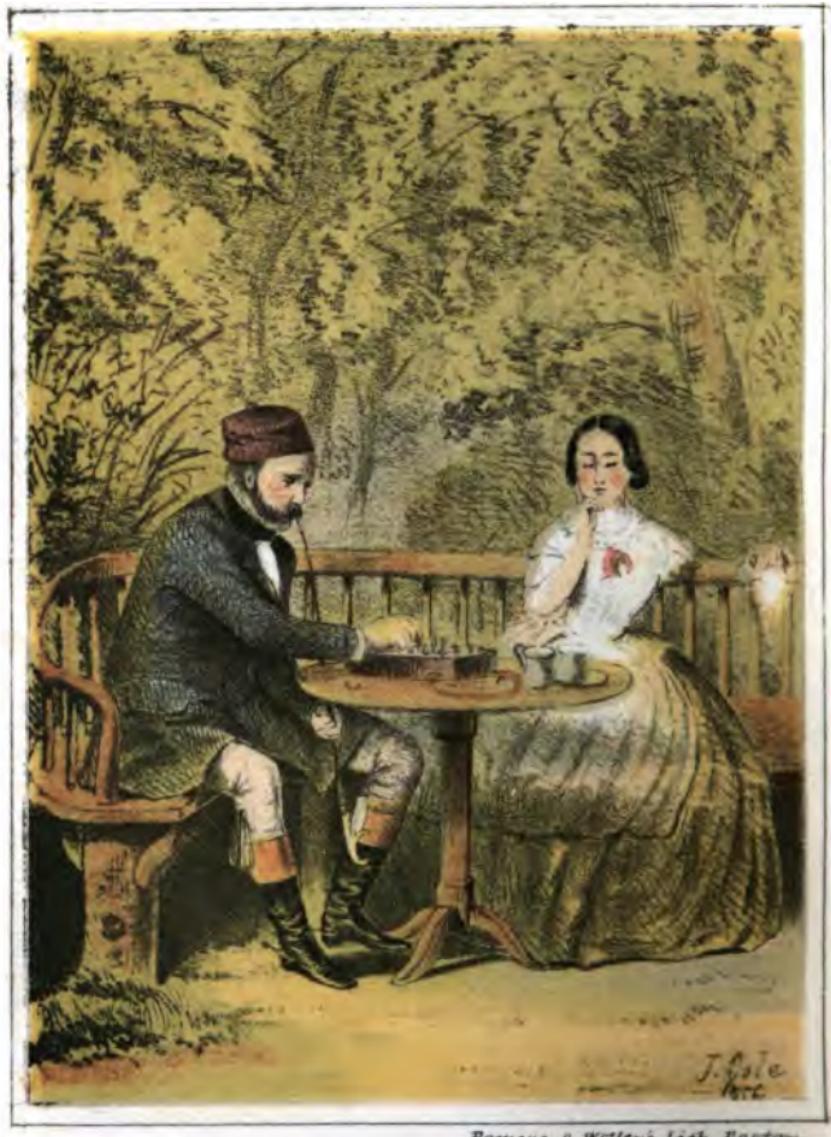
Lina wept his death even more bitterly than she had done that of her grandmother, for now she felt utterly desolate and alone in the great house, filled with so many strange people.

The Count and Countess spared no pains to soothe her sorrow and win her love, which she finally bestowed upon them with that fondly enduring intensity she had inherited from her poor, blind grandfather, and the patient, devoted Elsie.

THE RIVALS.

BY

AGNES FRANZ.



Powers & Weston Lith. Boston.

LUCY AND HER UNCLE.

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THE RIVALS.

A TRUE STORY.

At the time when the success of the Allies had restored peace to Europe, a French general, named Raymond, sailed for the East Indies. His voyage was a successful one, and good fortune accompanied him through all his undertakings. When, in the month of May, 1834, he returned to Havre de Grace, his native place, he brought with him not only a million in gold, but also so many jewels and cashmeres that he scarcely knew what to do with all his treasures.

General Raymond had never been married, but he had one brother and one sister, whose children he loved.

“I will send for my nieces, and adopt as my own child the one who shall best please me,

that she may soothe and watch over me in my old age, and finally become my heiress."

In pursuance of this thought, he wrote to his relatives, informing them of his intentions, and inviting them to visit him with their daughters at the charming country seat he had purchased soon after his arrival.

The General's brother, Mr. Charles Raymond, occupied a distinguished position in Paris. His family consisted of two sons and one daughter, Amanda.

As soon as he learned that the rich nabob had returned from India, and intended adopting one of his nieces, he hastened to impart this intelligence to his wife. Madame Raymond received the welcome news with the liveliest joy. She had not the faintest doubt that her daughter would be the chosen one, and prepared herself to exhibit the shining qualities and endowments of her beloved child in the most advantageous manner possible.

Amanda, who had just reached her fifteenth year, promised to be as accomplished as she was handsome and well-grown. Great care had been bestowed upon her education. She

had been instructed in music, painting, and English; and before her journey to Normandy, she was to take some lessons in dancing from one of the most renowned masters. Who could doubt that, with all these advantages, Amanda could not fail to surpass her country cousins?

But however proud the hopes Madame Raymond had conceived for the future, those of Madame Anselmus, the General's sister, who lived in a small country town, were no less sanguine. Her husband, an honest manufacturer, conducted his affairs in quiet obscurity, and, with the aid of his steam-engine, spun his wool and wove his cotton. When he learned from his wife the invitation she had received, and that his daughters were also offered a share in the momentous choice, he was highly delighted, and immediately presented his children with a whole piece of the finest and best calico his factory could produce.

Lucy, the eldest of his children, was a good little creature of about thirteen years old. She assisted her mother in the housekeeping, was

attention itself towards her father, and, through her kind and benevolent disposition, was the especial favorite of all his workmen. Mary, the second daughter, would probably have been thought much prettier, had not an unfortunate affection of the eyes left them so weak that she never could expose herself to the light of day without wearing a shade, or other protection. Caroline, the youngest, was the idol of the family. Father, sisters, and all the servants of the house, following the example of Madame Anselmus, seemed to have eyes for the little one alone.

To comprehend this extraordinary partiality, it was necessary to have been informed of the long illnesses endured by the little Caroline, and of the unceasing watchfulness required for the preservation of her life. When one considered the endless night-watches, fatigues, and sufferings which Madame Anselmus had borne through love to this child, one could not but lament the meagre results of such great sacrifices; for Caroline looked much more like some unfortunate monstrosity, than like a healthy child. Although she was three years

old, she could not walk a single step, and still less could she frame her thoughts into any intelligible form of language. If she desired to speak her wishes, she did it in such harsh and disagreeable tones, that strangers stopped their ears; the tender mother and Lucy were the only persons who could comprehend the speech of the unfortunate child.

Notwithstanding all this, Madame Anselmus not only thought the little Caroline very beautiful, but even felt quite assured that her brother would immediately select her as his heiress. The noble and unselfish love of the mother led her to believe that all would share in her sentiments, and her blinded heart prophesied that her dear Caroline must certainly win her uncle's affection.

Mr. Anselmus, however, who considered the matter from a much more unprejudiced point of view, endeavored, but in vain, to persuade his wife to leave the younger children at home, for he knew that the good little Lucy was the only one among his daughters who could enter into a contest with Amanda for their uncle's favor.

Nature had in truth endowed Lucy and her cousin equally, although differently. With a lively and sensitive temperament, the latter possessed a clear understanding, overruled by her kind heart; and as to her exterior, her face, through its cheerful and friendly expression, was almost as pleasing as Amanda's, through the regularity of her features.

But nevertheless, what a striking contrast at the first glance appeared between the tastefully dressed Parisienne, who had acquired the most elegant and self-possessed demeanor, and poor Lucy, who was decked out in a calico gown as short as it was narrow, with a pair of old-fashioned sleeves, so immense and so stiffened that they came up nearly to her ears. Besides, her hair was so ill arranged, and her shoes and stockings so coarse and heavy, that Amanda could not refrain from smiling as she surveyed her little rival.

While Madame Raymond neglected no means of attracting the General's attention towards her daughter, who entertained him now with playing and singing, and now with reading English, poor Lucy found herself

continually occupied with her little sisters. She was also so modest and shy, that neither to her uncle, nor to her distinguished Parisian relatives, could she say a single word worth heeding.

Mary and Caroline, those little unfortunate creatures, felt so little at home, so forsaken amid the great, glittering rooms, that Lucy was forced to use every effort to soothe and conceal their ill-humor. It thus happened that Lucy was at first entirely overlooked by the General, and was usually to be found in one corner of the parlor with the little sick Caroline in her lap, a silent witness of her cousin's proficiency.

Madame Raymond, as well as her sister-in-law, who had arrived at the General's country place during the early part of July, had given a promise to remain at least three months; and the old man did all in his power to render their sojourn as pleasant as possible. The first few weeks were exclusively devoted to Amanda's triumph. She appeared early in the morning most tastefully dressed, and took her seat at her mother's side, and shared in

the conversation. In the evening she played easy variations, in the fashion of the day, or sang an air or so from the latest opera.

All this did very well for a short time. But as the subjects of her conversation were ever the same, always relating to balls, assemblies, pleasure parties, and fashions, and her repertory of art was soon exhausted, the General finally began to weary of this entertainment. He sent to Paris for new music for her, but this availed nothing. Amanda could not play well at sight, nor could she study a piece without the assistance of her teacher. Like many a young girl of her own age, she coveted praise and admiration, but she shunned the labor and self-sacrificing industry necessary to the real cultivation of any talent, and which alone could have secured to her permanent appreciation and applause; she was satisfied with the appearance, instead of striving for the reality.

It thus happened that General Raymond gradually began to turn his observation towards Lucy. He had long remarked the tenderness with which the little girl devoted

herself to her younger sisters. In order to win her confidence, he now began occasionally to caress Mary and Caroline. From that moment, Lucy had one interesting topic with which to entertain her uncle. She gradually thawed out, to use a common expression, and finally ventured to bestow upon her revered relative all the tender little attentions she had been in the habit of showering upon her father from her earliest childhood. She intuitively divined all his wants, and her eyes beamed with joy when she had succeeded in anticipating his secret wishes. The General was especially pleased with the heartfelt friendliness and good-nature which were Lucy's most peculiar characteristics.

When the neighboring land-owners visited the chateau with their wives and daughters, she spared no pains to provide for the comfort and amusement of her guests, without regard to their appearance, their agreeability, or tediousness. Hence, Lucy always received a hearty parting kiss, at least as affectionate and truly felt as the bow given to Amanda; she was most cordially invited to visit them,

and endless were the caresses with which she was greeted.

Amanda, on the contrary, who, if not exactly haughty and contemptuous, yet possessed an extremely cold disposition, displeased the mothers, because she overshadowed their daughters,—and the daughters, because she had so many acquirements, and so little friendliness,—and, finally, her uncle, because nothing is more contagious than the judgment and opinions of those around us. An individual who is agreeable to very few persons, will in time cease to be esteemed even by that small number.

The position of the little rivals stood thus, when an apparently insignificant circumstance finally decided the uncle's choice.

It happened that a magnificent ball was to be given in a neighboring city, to which the General and his guests were invited.

Who knows not the pleasure which the prospect of a ball offers to young people? Both girls received the news with sparkling eyes, and both counted the hours to the promised festival!

"How glad I shall be to see Amanda dance!" cried the good little Lucy.

"And it will certainly afford me great amusement to see Lucy in her ball costume!" replied Amanda, in a tone which formed a most striking contrast to Lucy's good-natured expression of delight in her cousin's acquirements.

This occurrence caused the General to bestow upon his nieces glances which began to render Madame Raymond quite uneasy.

The eve of the ball arrived, and it so happened that Amanda's father had forgotten to send her the flowers with which she intended to ornament her hair and her dress. The spoiled child was terribly out of humor, and no one could get a friendly word from her during the whole evening.

Early the next morning Lucy was missed. She was to be found neither in the chateau nor in the surrounding gardens. Mother, uncle, and sisters, all called her name in vain. She finally returned, just as the bell was summoning the family to the breakfast-table.

"Where have you been?" cried her mother.
"To the extreme end of the park!" replied Lucy. "O, look at the beautiful wreath of hawthorn! I had a great deal of trouble to find it, because it is not so common here as in our woods!"

"And what will you do with it?" asked some one.

"I gathered it for Amanda," replied Lucy.

"Take it, dear aunt," she added, turning with joy-beaming eyes to Madame Raymond: "I hope there will be quite enough to make one bunch for the hair, another for the side, and another to loop up the dress with." At these words Lucy uncovered the treasures, which she had brought in her apron.

All were touched by so delicate an attention,—even Amanda, who had not a bad heart, only a cold and selfish disposition, and who now felt, with shame, how far her little rival surpassed her in real goodness of feeling.

After breakfast, the General invited Lucy into his cabinet. He there gave her a beautiful ball dress of white crape, trimmed with satin of the same color; for he desired that

her appearance should be quite equal to that of Amanda.

Lucy was of course highly delighted with this gift; but what was her surprise when the worthy man led her to a table whereon stood two neat jewel-caskets, and begged her to choose between two necklaces, one of turquoise, and one of amethyst.

"If, dear uncle, you have really determined to give me one of these costly necklaces, will you permit me to do as I like with it?"

"Certainly!" replied the General; "but why this question?"

"You see, dear uncle," answered she confidently, "that, to my taste, the blue stones which you call turquoises are much the prettier; but I choose the purple ones, because, if you will allow me, I will lend them to Amanda, to complete her ball dress. They have precisely the color of the blooming hawthorn, and will suit admirably with Amanda's fair hair."

"Bravo, my child!" cried the General. "Henceforth, let no one tell me you have no taste! But now you must take this tur-

quoise necklace too! It will suit no less admirably with your white dress, and your brown hair!"

"O that is too much,—too much, dear uncle!" stammered Lucy.

"Dear child!" said the General, pressing her to his heart, "this is not yet all I intend to bestow upon you!"

On that very day he announced his intention of adopting Lucy as his child, and named her as his future heiress. To all who asked him the reason of this decision, he replied: "I might reasonably fear becoming weary of - Amanda's sonatas and cavatinas, but never of Lucy's goodness of heart, which I am quite sure will afford me the same pleasure and enjoyment in my most advanced age which it occasions me at the present moment."

Nor was the General mistaken. He employed masters for his adopted daughter; her intellect developed, while her heart continued ever the same, and many were the happy evenings they passed together conversing, reading, or playing chess,—the General's fa-

vorite game, a taste for which he had cultivated while in India.

Mr. Anselmus was delighted at his daughter's good fortune and his own sagacity; and the mother was reconciled to the exclusion of her favorite, by the love and attention which Lucy never ceased to bestow upon all the members of her own family.

THE FRIENDS.

BY

AGNES FRANZ.

14

T H E F R I E N D S.

HUGH and Alfred had often played together as children, and received their first instruction in the mysteries of learning at the same school. Major von Zabern, Hugh's father, possessed no private fortune, and lived in great retirement upon his pension. Alfred's parents were worthy burghers, and had determined to make a merchant of their son.

The two dwellings stood side by side,— and Alfred had thus become associated with his little neighbor, whose parents always gave him a hearty welcome, for the boy was universally extolled for his industry and blameless conduct. Alfred was somewhat older than Hugh, and also his superior in knowledge, personal strength, and dexterity. He

always accompanied him to school, and would boldly take his part upon occasion, or extricate him from his not infrequent difficulties with his lessons.

Some years later, Hugh was also enabled to be of service to his friend. By means of his father's aid, he had made rapid progress in the French language, and, as Alfred was somewhat backward in this respect, Hugh begged his parents to permit his friend to share his lessons; a privilege which they willingly conceded to so good a boy. The same permission was granted with regard to the lessons in drawing received by Hugh, during which the latter developed quite an extraordinary talent. When not more than eleven years old, he could not only copy with ease and precision the most difficult exemplars, but he also created many beautiful original specimens of his art, and was peculiarly happy in catching likenesses; these were sometimes really astonishing.

He often made this faculty a means of amusing his comrades. He drew them all, one after the other; and as Alfred was ever

watchful of his friend's advantage, he strove to render his skill practically useful to Hugh, by praising his beautiful drawings with the air of a connoisseur, until many willingly paid Hugh a small sum for each new proof of his ability. The latter soon possessed quite a pretty little fund as pocket-money, and was as happy as a king.

Both boys expended their treasures in the best manner possible, bought birds and rabbits, and lived through a happy, innocent period. The older they became, the more closely were their hearts united. They received the names of *Orestes* and *Pylades*, and rejoiced in the appellations. But more especially was Alfred's attachment to Hugh of the most tender kind. The former possessed a gentle and affectionate nature, while the latter cared more for the things pertaining to an active, external life. Hugh's love of excitement often led him to misuse his skill. In order to please his comrades, he would draw caricatures and other laughable things, and then rejoice in the noisy applause which his inventions had won for him. Alfred, who in truth helped Hugh to

paint his pictures, was frequently supposed to have assisted him in these satirical productions, while on the contrary he often expostulated with his friend on the injudicious choice of his subjects. But this was of no avail. The two boys were always named together, and the fame of their comical museum finally spread from school to school.

One day, the friends' picture-gallery was enriched by a most attractive addition.

A wealthy brewer, whose corpulence and curious physiognomy had long before excited Hugh's observation, was one day seen in the street after a long drinking frolic. This circumstance had been sketched by the presumptuous boy, and he had represented the fat man with a long queue, on which all sorts of laughable little figures were seated, mocking and jesting. The likeness was so striking that no one could fail to recognize it at once.

Alfred, who feared the brewer's hasty temper, warned Hugh against permitting his witty picture to be generally seen. The latter, however, could not withstand the temptation of showing it to his comrades, who were of

course highly delighted; and the news soon ran like wildfire through the town: "Alfred and Hugh have painted the fat brewer, with the queue he got on his last frolic!"

It was not long before the brewer himself heard of the jest played off at his expense. His face immediately reddened with rage, and he swore to have a speedy vengeance upon one of the boys. Unfortunately, the innocent Alfred first fell into his hands, and as he thought he need not stand much upon ceremony with one of his class, he dragged him forcibly into his house, and there flogged him so severely that the poor fellow left the place with many a bleeding wound.

When Hugh heard of the abuse which his poor friend had suffered on his account, he was so indignant that he wished to confront the brewer forthwith, assure him of Alfred's innocence, and announce himself as the only culprit. Alfred, however, conjured him, with tears in his eyes, to let the whole matter rest as it was.

"You will need a testimonial of good conduct when you go to the military school!"

said he; "the old fellow is angry enough to tell the whole affair to the professors, and then you could hardly escape a severe reprimand."

Hugh was deeply touched, and folded Alfred in his arms. Both renewed their promise of remaining true to each other through all of good or ill that might betide.

A year after this occurrence the friends were separated. Alfred left school and entered a large drug-store as a clerk, while Hugh was sent to a military academy many miles distant from his native town. The friends at parting exchanged gifts, and the walls of Alfred's little room were decorated by many productions of his friend's imagination, among which a picture of Don Julian, dictating the famous letter which first brought the Moors into Spain, was considered a masterpiece of drawing and coloring.

The friends could not hope to see one another more than once or twice in the year, for Hugh could only receive permission to visit his parents during the vacations.

While Alfred kept the image of his friend



Powers & Wileman's Lith. Boston.

DON JULIAN DICTATING HIS FIRST LETTER TO THE MOORS.

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enshrined within the depths of a true and faithful heart, and lightened days of hard work and bitter dependence by the remembrance of a happy childhood, Hugh suddenly found himself transplanted into a circle of young men who chiefly belonged to the first families in the country, and had been brought up amid all the comforts, habits, morals, and manners of the higher ranks.

He soon discovered that he had much to learn, of which he had never before dreamed. He encountered opinions and prejudices unknown in his father's house, and permitted himself to be imposed upon by the fashionable indifference with which these young people looked down upon much he had formerly been taught to consider as sacred and honorable. For the first time in his life he felt the advantages of his birth, and the chasm which in this particular existed between himself and his former comrade.

His heart told him that Alfred should be an exception to the general rule ;— and he entertained his new companions with enthusiastic accounts of the noble disposition and self-

sacrificing devotion of his friend, and how they had contracted a bond of friendship which was to last during their whole lives.

"I have no doubt he was an excellent school friend," said one of his present acquaintances ; "but now that you have entered a new sphere of life your fraternal union should have an end. You now wear the king's uniform, and must pay a proper regard to the duties of your military position. A shop-boy with a leather-apron, weighing out cod-fish, and serving his customers to molasses, would be a poor companion for a gentleman. His brotherly familiarity would compromise you in the eyes of others, and I counsel you to withdraw in time from an association which can have none but disagreeable consequences!"

Hugh knit his brows, and was about to reply ; but so many joined in the conversation, and he was so unmercifully quizzed about his Pylades, that he felt deeply wounded, and inwardly vowed never again to speak on this subject in the presence of his new friends.

He was silent with regard to Alfred, through fear of being considered a ridiculous simpleton,

and the natural consequence was, that he thought of him less and less every day. When the approach of the vacation forced the remembrance of his friend upon him, a burning red flushed his cheeks. The circumstances amid which he fancied Alfred repelled him, and he feared the ridicule of his comrades when, at his return, they would inquire concerning his relations with his friend.

The vacation finally came. Hugh made his appearance in his native town in his new and brilliant uniform, and the parents joyfully greeted their beloved son, whose exterior had much changed for the better. He accompanied his father to the parade-ground, and made with him several visits. Hugh twice passed the house where Alfred lived, but did not venture to turn his eyes towards the shop, and still less to ask for his friend.

The sensible mother finally came to the aid of her son's embarrassment. She invited Alfred to the house, and thus lifted a weight from Hugh's conscience. Alfred appeared, and Hugh's formality soon vanished before the

heartfelt welcome given him by his friend. Alfred embraced him with tears in his eyes, and his tender glance seemed to be striving to read in the depths of Hugh's soul whether he had remained faithful to their covenant of friendship.

Hugh, on the contrary, who since his association with so many fashionable and vain young men, had learned to consider the exterior as all important, closely scrutinized the mien, manners, and dress of his former schoolmate. Alfred was carefully attired, he wore his Sunday suit, but the cut of it did not please Hugh; especially was he shocked at the coarse, red hands which issued from the old-fashioned sleeves, recalling to his memory all the jests and mockery of his late comrades.

He found difficulty in hiding his embarrassment, when, in the course of the conversation, Alfred proposed accompanying him on the following Sunday to a park associated with many boyish remembrances. Hugh assented, but silently determined to find some pretext for avoiding this public appearance with Alfred.

The latter left his friend, his whole soul overflowing with joy. This short hour of reunion, after so long a separation, had refreshed his lonely heart, and he innocently rejoiced in the prospect of a longer and entirely uninterrupted interview on the proposed walk.

But who can describe his astonishment, when, on Sunday morning, he received a hasty note from Hugh, excusing himself upon some frivolous pretext, and shortly after saw him ride past his window in a brilliant equipage, with a titled family of the neighborhood, and without vouchsafing him a single greeting! Alfred began to doubt, laid his hand upon his brow, and sank into a deep meditation.

“He can no longer be the same as of old,” said he to himself, “or he would have set all aside to be with me!”

Sadly and silently he betook himself alone to the park. During his solitary walk, the feeling dawned ever more clearly upon him that some unknown hand had placed division between Hugh and himself, and he immediately determined, if this should be the case, to

spare his friend all annoyance upon his account.

But when he reached the shady park, he greeted in mute sorrow every tree, every spot which had been the witness of his youthful happiness. He was standing before a birch-tree bearing his friend's and his own initials, interwoven, when a lively company issued from one of the side walks. Two young ladies and several officers hurried past him: one of the young men in uniform turned round,—it was Hugh. Both stood an instant uncertain, when Alfred involuntarily held out his hand; but Hugh shrugged his shoulders, pointed to his companions, and hastened after them, leaving Alfred gazing upon his retreating figure with a sorrowful heart.

“He is the plaything of circumstance!” said Alfred, sighing, and the truth of these words at once revealed the chasm which worldly relations and prejudices had placed between them. “Our rank divides us,—probably for ever!” cried he. “But—Heaven is my witness!—I will—never forget the love of our youth, and should he be false to me,

so much the more true will I show myself to him."

As he took this resolution, he became more calm, and speedily returned to his home. He carefully avoided meeting Hugh, anxious to spare him all embarrassment, and himself a fresh repulse. He became more industrious than ever, and desired, with all his heart, to free himself from the yoke of circumstance, and attain a more independent position. He pictured to himself glowing images of a free and unshackled existence; but Hugh always occupied a prominent place in his visions; indeed, he often wished to reach the highest pinnacle of success and wealth, that he might show his faithless friend how unchanged his feelings could remain through all the vicissitudes of life, and how he only valued the gifts of fortune, because he could share them with him whom his youthful heart had chosen as a friend.

Several years passed, during which Alfred and Hugh occasionally met, but never enjoyed that exchange of thought and feeling

without which no friendship can exist. Hugh had, meanwhile, been attached to a regiment which was stationed alternately in his native city and in a distant fortress. When he entered this new and trying position, he could no longer be under the true and watchful eye of a father; a circumstance soon productive of consequences to the young, inexperienced, and pleasure-loving officer, which harassed him during a long period of his life. Immediately after his arrival at the new post, he was drawn into a whirl of amusements which did not suffer him to cast a single quiet glance upon his really mediocre station.

He made no reasonable disposition of his money, but lived entirely in the present, surrounded by the flatteries of false friends, who well knew how to make use of his inexperience. His tendency to vanity, and a desire to please all, led him daily into new temptations. He feasted his comrades, spent his income in the purchase of objects of fashion and luxury, and was highly delighted at having by these means won the reputation of being one of the best fellows in the regiment.

In the beginning all went well. When his purse was exhausted, he borrowed, and all were at first willing to lend. His parents meanwhile wrote to him, and urged him to be more careful in the management of his finances. But he sedulously hid all such epistles from the eyes of his comrades, as he desired above all to pass for a rich man. Finally, when the borrowed sums became too large, and his credit began to fail, he had recourse to the customary refuge of the prodigal, the gaming-table, in order to free himself from his embarrassments. He won at first considerably, but soon lost the double of his winnings, and fell, in consequence, into such heavy indebtedness, that even his position in his regiment became precarious.

Impelled by the fear of disgrace, he wrote to his mother, and confessed to her his melancholy situation. The poor lady scarcely had the courage to show her husband the letter, which had fallen, like a stroke of lightning from a serene sky, into the midst of her hitherto peaceful existence. The effort, however, must be made, and with a beating heart the

mother placed the prodigal's confession in his father's hand, accompanying it with an earnest prayer for pardon and assistance.

Although the information by no means surprised the experienced man, yet the amount of his son's indebtedness far surpassed his worst fears. He was exceedingly angry with his undutiful son, and was very near leaving him to the consequences of his faithless stewardship, had not the devoted mother employed all her eloquence and powers of persuasion in changing his resolution.

To save Hugh, a large sum was necessary, which must be paid at once in order to avert the most threatening consequences. The Major had no alternative except to borrow the money, and gradually repay it from his own and his son's income.

With a heavy heart did the sorrowful old man betake himself to one of the wealthiest merchants in the town, and ask his assistance in this mortifying affair. There were a number of clerks in the merchant's counting-house, but the Major, in order to explain the pressing nature of his application, was forced to touch

both upon his son's difficulties, and the small amount of his own property.

The merchant, who probably feared, from the Major's delicate appearance, that he could not long reckon upon the upright and honest dealing of the good father, most politely excused himself, and took some pains to show his petitioner how frequently his treasury had been called upon of late, and that he could at present spare no more.

The dejected father was sorrowfully leaving the house, when he suddenly heard a well-known voice behind him, and, turning, recognized at once the figure of Alfred hastening after him.

"You desire a loan," said the young man, gently, "and I hear that the speedy fulfilment of your demand is a matter of the greatest moment to your son. Will you permit me to offer you the sum required? My yearly savings, and a small prize in a lottery, place it in my power to serve you,— and surely I have no need to say, either to you or to your son, how much pleasure it will give me to be able to do so."

“Noble young man!” cried the Major, striving in vain to repress his tears, for he well knew how little claim his son had to such a service from Alfred’s friendship. But as Alfred would take no denial, and begged him so fervently not to refuse his offer, he finally yielded, and did not attempt to conceal his satisfaction as the young man placed the required sum in his hand.

“Great God!” cried Alfred, when he again found himself in his solitary room; “how can I thank Thee for having permitted me to perform so signal a service for my friend! Wilt Thou not guide him upon better paths, that his future may be more serene and happy!”

It really seemed as if his prayer had been heard. The Major himself took the money to his son, and made the necessary arrangements for relieving the inexperienced youth from all further embarrassment. This visit, the solemn earnestness with which the father implored his son to lead a more upright and steady life, and especially the noble and unselfish friendship which Alfred had shown towards him, made a deep impression upon the young officer’s mind.

He determined henceforth to become more serious, and act more prudently ; he avoided all expensive pleasures, and lived as economically as possible. As he led a more retired life, he had also time to devote himself to the practice of his former favorite art. He drew, painted, and endeavored ever more and more to perfect himself in this pursuit. In short, he gave every promise of permanent amendment, when he suddenly received the news of his father's death.

This loss caused him the greatest consternation. Not only because he had lost his best friend and counsellor ; but also because his mother, being now restricted to a very small widow's pension, could no longer send him supplies from home, and he again found himself placed in a very difficult position.

One day he received the note which his father had given to Alfred, with a receipt in full upon it. He could not understand how this could be, but he was most delightfully surprised. Soon after, he visited his native town, and saw his good mother for the first time since his father's death. He found her

much changed, and she gave him indeed but a sorrowful greeting, for she felt how short must be the time still allotted her to live for the son of her heart.

She knew nothing concerning the payment of the note, and immediately concluded that Alfred had, to serve his friend, withdrawn all claim to the amount, and had taken this way of avoiding their thanks.

“O Hugh!” said the mother, “what a noble spirit this young man has! Surely he is not without true nobility, and you would act very wrongly did you continue to heed the idle prejudice which has so long separated you from such a devoted friend.”

Hugh felt the truth of these words, but nevertheless found no pleasure in the thought of meeting Alfred. He felt degraded by the fact of having received so heavy an obligation from a youth in Alfred's position,—and he would have preferred to have paid a tenfold sum for the latter, to the necessity of receiving the actual amount from him. Finally, however, he overcame his pride sufficiently to betake himself to Alfred's dwelling. But the young man

was no longer there. He had taken an engagement in another house, and had consequently removed to a seaport town. He had left only a few hours before, and it seemed as if he wished to cover his generosity with a close mantle of secrecy, for Hugh could not even learn his address.

Although the young officer was much surprised at his friend's course, he could not avoid feeling relieved. "He is an excellent man," said he to himself, "but it is much better our paths in life should remain divided. There is something in my nature which must ever render a nearer connection disagreeable."

He returned home more cheerful than usual, and his mother shook her head when, during the ensuing conversation, she perceived a satisfaction at his friend's departure, which betrayed great weakness of mind and heart in her son.

Two years after this visit, Hugh received the sad intelligence of his mother's death. She left him a letter full of the most tender advice,

which he again and again moistened with his tears. He knew well that the truest heart upon the earth had been torn from him, and that he must henceforth stand alone amid the perils of life. He sincerely determined to fulfil all her wishes, and to become such a man as she would have desired to see him ; he would most probably have reached his aim, had he not been surrounded by false friends, who lured him from the straight path, and plunged him into a whirl of deceitful pleasures.

It soon became known that he had inherited a small property from his deceased parents, and he was beset on all sides by men who, aware of his weak points, urged him through his silly vanity and false generosity to play the part of a rich heir. His unfortunate love of display, which had so long been held in subjection, now awoke with new force. He arranged all about him in the most tasteful manner, lived well and in the enjoyment of all possible pleasures, freely sharing his supposed wealth with his comrades, until his entire inheritance had vanished.

It is always difficult to pass from a life of

display and enjoyment to one of economy and self-denial. This was a task beyond Hugh's strength! He became more and more deeply indebted, and finally took refuge in gaming. He would borrow at the highest rates of interest, without having the remotest means of payment, and again stake all upon the turning of a card! He was like an unwary seaman trusting himself in a leaky vessel to the mercy of the winds and waves. Any moment might bring ruin upon him,—and who was there now to save him, standing alone in the world, without parents, without property, without a single wealthy friend?

A debt of honor which he contracted in a moment of despair, completed his ruin. His creditor was merciless. The colonel of the regiment was informed of this circumstance, to which were added many late derelictions from duty, and Hugh was given to understand that the only way left for him to save his military honor was to resign. This information filled him with a blank horror. He still hoped upon the good offices of the comrades whom he had so often feasted; but all turned their

backs upon him, and left him to battle alone with his unhappy fate.

The miserable man found himself a prey to the most bitter wretchedness! Under cover of a dark and stormy night, he left the scene of his former brilliancy and present shame. Throwing himself into a post-coach, he took his passage for a distant seaport. He had no clear ideas as to his future destiny; his only desire was to escape from his earlier associations, to leave his country,—perhaps to try his fortune in some new world.

The coach posted on and on, and finally brought him, with his senses all benumbed, to the goal whither some inexplicable impulse had directed him. The noise and bustling activity of a mercantile city forced still more painfully upon him the consciousness of his own forlorn situation.

He wandered up and down the docks, and gazed with longing eyes upon a large merchantman all ready to sail. He learned that it was to depart on the following day for the West Indies, and felt a keen desire to go with it to some new quarter of the globe. But how

to meet the necessary expenses ? He struck his hand despairingly upon his forehead. Suddenly, a loud shout from a neighboring building fell upon his ear. A couple of sailors rushed out, holding up several rouleaux of money which they had won at play.

“ I have nothing further to lose ! ” cried Hugh, as this scene met his view. “ Courage, then, and I will stake my last penny ! ”

So saying, he hurried into the stately edifice, where cards and dice were deciding the fate of the misguided company standing closely packed round a faro-table. Fortune seemed at first to smile upon him ; he won,— and in a state of great excitement gathered in his gold pieces. He then ventured a larger sum, again won, and grew ever bolder. But one unhappy throw at length destroyed the frail edifice of his good fortune ! His vain winnings vanished as they had come,— with them went the small remnant of his previous funds ;— and Hugh, reduced to beggary, hurried in despair from the cruel and mocking crowd, whose scornful laughter resounded in his ears as the exultation of fiends.

His face was pale as death, his features distorted, and his dark locks floated without a covering of any kind upon the breeze blowing freshly from the harbor. Despair was in his heart, and he had taken his resolutions accordingly.

He sought a comparatively secluded spot, and stared down wildly into the restless deep, whose surging billows seemed to be luring him nearer and nearer. Suddenly, a strong arm was thrown around him, and a well-known voice called his name in tones at once of love and horror. Hugh shuddered, and raised his troubled eyes. "Alfred!" stammered he, in a broken voice, and then fell back fainting into the arms of his preserver.

When Hugh again awoke to consciousness, he found himself in a pleasant room, while over him bent a countenance filled with unutterable anxiety and sorrow.

"God be praised! You still live!" cried Alfred, as, deeply moved, he folded his friend in a close embrace.

The young merchant, with the tact of real

affection, endeavored to avoid all allusions which might recall the unhappy moment of their recognition, and told his friend that he was about to sail for the West Indies in the vessel which was to leave on the following morning, and that he was momentarily awaiting the arrival of his baggage.

"And may I ask," added he gently, "where you think of journeying to?"

"Wherever I can find a Lethe draught for a ruined and unhappy life!" replied Hugh, laughing bitterly.

Alfred grew pale; a shudder ran through all his nerves, and yet time pressed; he must try everything to inspire the despairing man with renewed hope and courage.

"Great God!" prayed he silently, "let me save him! Give my words strength, that they may invigorate his prostrate soul, and assist me with thy counsel, and thy almighty power!"

He affectionately laid the exhausted man's head upon his breast, and strove to resume, as prudently as possible, the broken thread of his discourse.

"If you mean to that lovely country which I already know so well, I believe you will never find cause to repent your resolution," said he gently. "Only a short time since, you were most vividly recalled to my mind. You must have read in the public prints how pressingly artists, especially portrait-painters, are invited to St. Domingo, and how even the slightest sketches are there worth their weight in gold. I then remembered our youth, and how often you had made me your agent,—and lo! my heart longed for an opportunity once more to live over that happy time! I am ignorant what plan of life you intend to pursue; but if you should determine to transplant your fine talent to that lovely clime, I could sincerely wish you joy, and my pleasure would be boundless, for thus could I see the fulfilment of my dearest hopes!"

"You wish to save me a second time!" cried Hugh with emotion.

"I do not understand you, dearest friend!" replied Alfred; "but I know that this hour seems to me like a blessed answer to my fervent prayers, for my soul never ceased to cling to yours with the truest affection."

Hugh pressed his hand, and Alfred continued to entertain him with the most enchanting pictures. He gave an eloquent description of his first journey to St. Domingo, of his employer's satisfaction with its results, and how, through some fortunate speculations, he had been enabled to increase his own property so considerably, that he now possessed an income far beyond his requirements.

"O go with me, dear friend!" begged he imploringly. "I invite you to a new and lovely world as if I were its possessor! Do not deprive me of the joy of being your guide! You are my brother, and what is mine is also yours. We will share whatever the Lord has destined for us, happiness or misery, riches or poverty. But if you find it as I have promised you, you must again permit me, as of old, to sun myself in the glory of your fame as an artist!"

Hugh smiled upon the amiable enthusiast. The coldness and pride encrusting his heart melted into floods of penitent tears as he gazed into the loving eyes of so tender and true a friend.

“ O thou noble heart!” cried he, “ what can I be to thee, that thou shouldst once more seek to win me back to life? Me, a miserable wretch, who withdrew himself from thy love, because he cared more for an idle prejudice than for a pure bond, far surpassing the seeming friendship of thousands? Me, an unworthy man, who once feared to pass your door lest he should be forced to meet the friendly pressure of your faithful hand, and who, wantonly staking fortune, happiness, and honor on the inconsiderate gratification of a passing moment, lost all,— all except the priceless jewel of a heart which a merciful God led to my aid and salvation? O Alfred, Alfred!” sobbed he, as he fell, overcome with unutterable feelings, upon his friend’s bosom.

They still held each other in a close embrace, when a servant, sent from Alfred’s employer, announced the arrival of his baggage, and asked for further orders concerning his approaching departure. The young merchant said a few words in a low tone to the boy, and then begged his friend to follow him.

“ Whither?” asked Hugh.

"To buy your painting materials," replied Alfred with decision.

Hugh followed as if in a dream. All was provided and arranged. When the sun rose on the following morning, a wide expanse of water rolled between the two travellers and the shores of their native land.

Propitious stars shone upon their voyage and their entrance into the new world. Alfred's prophecies were more than fulfilled, and Hugh's talents soon opened for him the way to a renewed and happy existence. In a short time fame and honor were added to pecuniary advantages, and, better than these, a long-lost inward peace once more dwelt calmly in the innermost recesses of his soul.

But best of all was the unchanging friendship which had accompanied him through the various vicissitudes of life, and which rendered even his old age joyful and happy,—a friendship which had shamed down the prejudices of a contemptuous worldliness, and which was anchored fast upon the solid foundation of a truly noble spirit.

THE BEST DOWRY.

BY

AGNES FRANZ.

THE BEST DOWRY.

AFTER a cessation of intercourse which had lasted many years, the wife of Councillor Lobau one day called upon the widow of Professor Lenhart. They had been friends in youth, but the early widowhood and consequent poverty of the latter had long since cut her off from the society of fashionable ladies.

But it was not the memory of so many happy hours passed together, nor the bond of a newly awakened affection, which again led the Councillor's wife to the widow's long neglected abode.

With foolish and idle vanity did the splendidly arrayed lady cross the threshold of the modest apartment in which the Professor's widow sat, busied with her feminine occupa-

tions ; for she was obliged to have recourse to her needle to aid in the support of herself and her children.

“ My dear,” began the rich merchant’s wife, “ I have come to you to order my daughters’ wedding clothes ; for they are both betrothed, and I wish their trousseaus to be even more magnificent than tender and careful parents of my rank in life are in the habit of bestowing upon their children. I will spare nothing, and all must be worthy of our wealth and position.”

The lady expended much self-satisfied eloquence in expatiating upon the unusual value of the trousseaus, the rich ornaments, splendid furniture, &c., which her daughters were to receive as their dowry.

“ You will then give your daughters much more than they can need ! ” quietly observed the widow.

“ By no means ! ” replied the Councillor’s lady. “ An education suitable for the best society necessarily brings with it a host of wants ; — and I will be quite satisfied and happy if, through those very cares which ap-

pear to you superfluous, I can spare my daughters the discomforts of possible privation."

"Ah! if it be so," said the widow, smiling gently, "I have prepared a much richer dowry for my daughters."

"A much richer?" cried the proud lady in astonishment, at the same time casting a contemptuous glance upon the speaker.

"If you desire proof of the truth of my assertion," was the answer, "follow me to my children's apartment, and I will there show you jewels worth tenfold those you have destined to the supply of your daughters' necessities."

So saying, she led her visitor into a small, but unusually pretty and tastefully furnished chamber. There sat three simply dressed young girls, busily at work upon the various articles which usually employ skilful feminine fingers. Their neat handiwork was pleasant to look upon, and not less so were their rosy cheeks, glowing with health, and their bright, cheerful, beaming eyes.

As their mother entered with the stranger,

they all rose and greeted the lady with graceful and modest reverence. The Professor's widow, however, pointed them out to the friend of her youth, and her eyes glistened as she said:—

“Look! the jewels which I mean are the skill and industry of those hands. May the splendid dowry of your daughters bring them as much happiness and real content as I hope to glean as the fruit of my labors in the education and training of my children. Have they not more than is required for a peaceful enjoyment of all that life can bestow? Skill and industry are everywhere prized, and my daughters' necessary wants are small in number. The man who chooses one of them will have no reason to complain. The dowry I give with my children is more secure than the possession of piles of gold,—and a noble and sensible wooer will prize it far beyond all the pearls and treasures of the Orient.”

The widow ceased, deeply moved, and the pretty maidens, standing round their mother, blushed and cast down their eyes; for never

before had they heard the dear one whom they all so tenderly loved boast of the value of their pious industry, and extraordinary skill.

THE END.

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